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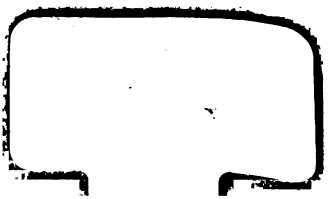

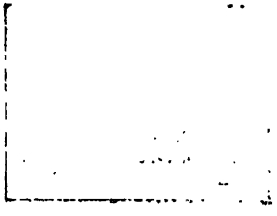

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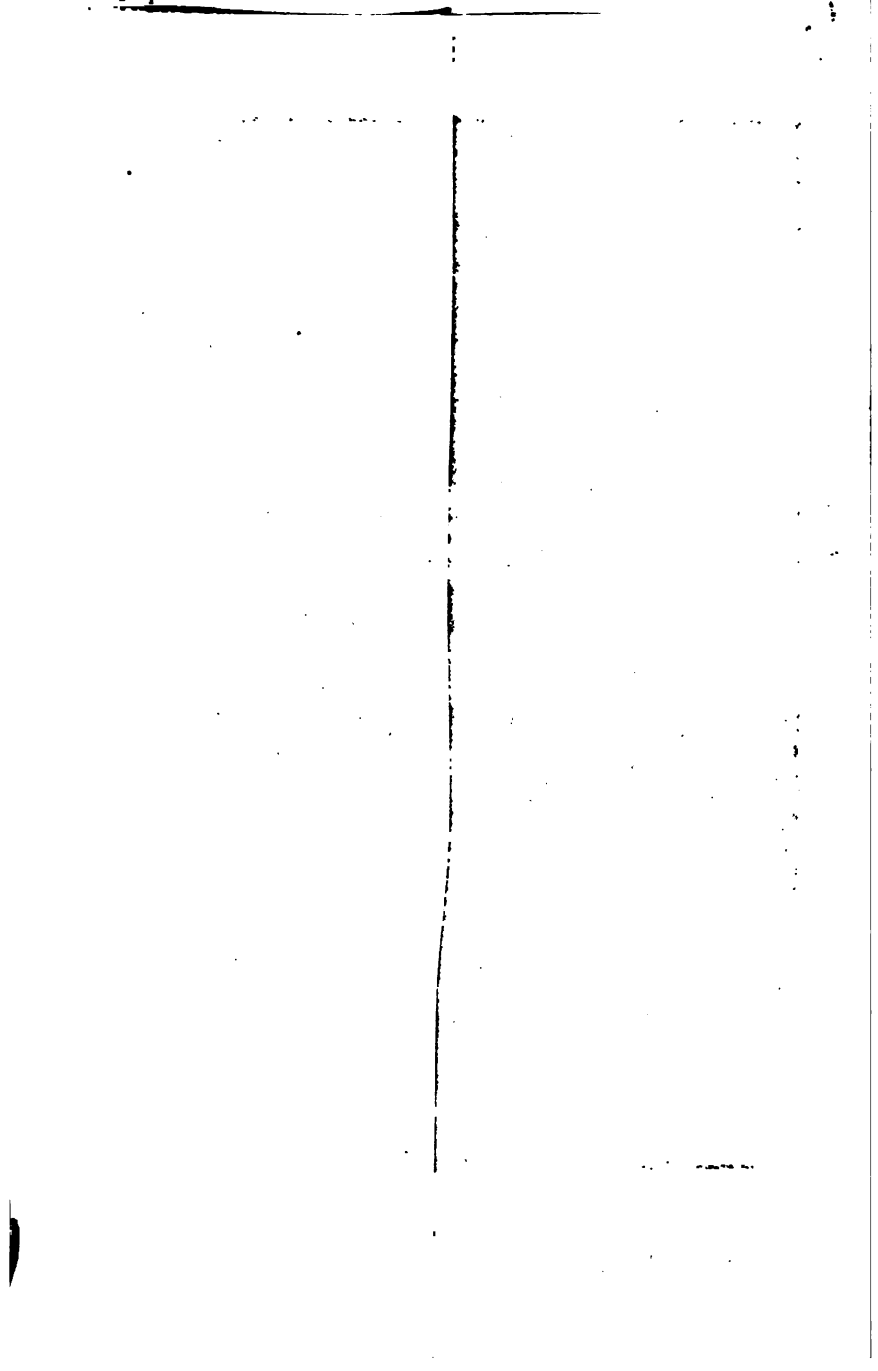

THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

L'Homme Sans Figure

BY

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ENGLISH VERSION BY

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G. W. DILLINGHAM COMPANY

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	A Crime	7
II.	In Place of a Lawyer I Find a Client	21
III.	The Power of the Press	34
IV.	Lucie Weil	44
V.	Douglass Listens to What Interests Barrabas	51
VI.	The Alienist Astonishes Barrabas and Douglass at the Same Time	62
VII.	The Murder of Lucie Weil	72
VIII.	That Which Followed	82
IX.	What Happened to Real Douglass	90
X.	Concerning Mrs. Kingsley's Will	110
XI.	The Visit	121
XII.	Z——	133
XIII.	The Man in Cell 13	140
XIV.	Give Me Five Louis	151
XV.	At the Salon	163
XVI.	The Millionaire Makes an Unexpected Move	176
XVII.	Bon Voyage	188

SECOND PART

DOUGLASS, KING OF THE WISE

XVIII.	The Phantom in Mid-Ocean	203
XIX.	Lucie Calls at the Waldorf	215
XX.	Addison Kingsley's Scheme	222
XXI.	Lucie's Vanity	231
XXII.	Kingsley is Despondent	236

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXIII.	POLYDORE'S DUAL CHARACTER	241
XXIV.	WHAT THEY MEAN BY CHANGING SHOULDERS	249
XXV.	THE PROCEEDINGS	255
XXVI.	THE DOCTOR'S ARRIVAL	264
XXVII.	POLYDORE IS RESIGNED	270
XXVIII.	LUCIE ASTONISHES EVERYBODY	275
XXIX.	2B+2R+2S+D+G+L=X	284
XXX.	THE BUNCH OF VIOLETS	297
XXXI.	I RETURN TO FRANCE	306
XXXII.	A VISIT TO THE ASYLUM	317
XXXIII.	THE MASK	328
XXXIV.	EPILOGUE	338

ILLUSTRATIONS

	PAGE
"My eyes still remained fixed on his face" *Frontispiece*	88
"Two hundred thousand dollars"	47
"Just a little as a pick-me-up. We shall need it" . .	96
He remained with vacant eyes fixed on my loathsome face	151
"Lucie! Lucie! my darling, you have come at last" .	324

THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE

CHAPTER I

A CRIME

I PACKED up my fishing tackle disconsolately and started to go home. Since 8 o'clock in the morning I had stood on the banks of the Marne and had caught only half a dozen roach.

As I walked along the little zigzag path before the pretty villa covered with ivy that belonged to old "Tape a l'Oeil," a retired army officer, the old soldier, who was in his garden, leaned over the fence and called out:

"Barrabas! Monsieur Barrabas!"

I crossed over to see what he wanted, and he said, without preamble:

"Run quickly home; a woman has just been murdered in your house!"

He turned his back on me abruptly and was soon lost in the alley of rose trees which led to his villa. The words were uttered so quickly and so suddenly

that I thought it was one of the old soldier's bad jokes.

I shrugged my shoulders, laughed and continued my walk with the same leisurely step, puffing at my pipe as I went. Then, in turning the lane, from behind the hedge of prickly hawthorn, Mother Carre, who was hanging out the laundry on the line, called out, in a voice trembling with emotion:

"Monsieur Barrabas! Hurry home, for the love of God! Something terrible has happened!"

And in the same abrupt manner she turned her back and walked quickly into the house. It seemed as if I, with my long artist's hair and flowing beard, had for the first time in my life inspired my neighbors with a feeling of terror.

A mason who passed turned his head and muttered, but not so low but that I could hear:

"It is about time! Here is Barrabas, King of Fools!"

I had never taken offense at this sobriquet. Why should I more than the old officer nicknamed "Tape a l'Oeil"? All our neighbors had some sort of appellation. They were usually without any significance, but many were decidedly droll. Without doubt mine was bestowed on me because my wisdom was too patent; also because I led a quiet, simple

life. I had no ambition. I was happy with my wife Gabrielle, my son Polydore and my daughter Evelyne.

My friends, who passed their lives in making vain efforts, thought I was good for nothing but to smoke a good pipe in the sun, to stand for hours soaking a thread in water and to sing from morning until night. My acquaintances pointed at me with a finger of scorn and disdainfully called me "the sculptor." They thought that the statuary which I was able to create after long years in the atelier of Barrias was the pastime of an idler. In addition, there was my long, flowing beard and hair and a certain love of the paradox in my conversation, so that it was really not astonishing that I passed in the little village of Bry for an eccentric individual and that I was nicknamed the King of Fools.

What Mother Carre had said did not disturb me any more than what "Tape a l'Oeil" had said. I thought it was some joke that had been started in the village. It seemed to me an impossibility that anyone could be assassinated in broad daylight. I left my wife with our son and daughter and the maid in our home. The cottage was on the route of Noisy, and perhaps it was a little isolated, but it was not sufficiently removed from the other habitations

to be exposed to a danger of this kind. Curiosity alone made me quicken my steps. It was exactly 11:10 o'clock when I pushed open the garden gate framed in the sweet-smelling honeysuckle. The peacefulness of my little cottage with the Gloire de Dijon roses, bathed in a golden sunlight, seemed to belie, by its discreet welcome, the tragedy heralded by my gossiping neighbors. The watch dog, Brutus, slept in his kennel, under the shadow of a plane tree. He scarcely deigned to unclose his eyelids as he wagged his tail. For one brief moment he turned his big, amber colored eyes in my direction, then closed them again in drowsy indolence.

I crossed the threshold of my home. In truth, while ridding myself in the hall of my fishing tackle, I was a little surprised that neither my wife nor my daughter came to meet me.

Silence everywhere!

I opened the dining-room door and a horrible sight transfixed me to the spot.

On the floor, beside the large divan Gabrielle—my wife Gabrielle—lay with arms outstretched and hands clinched.

From a ghastly wound in her temple the blood of life had flowed. On the floor there was a big red blot. It seemed at this awful moment that my heart

had ceased to beat. It seemed that my soul had been torn asunder, leaving a great void.

I knelt down beside the body and took the cold, rigid hands in mine. I examined the glassy eyes and the tightly closed mouth, which was shut, Sphinx-like, as though its last awful secret should not escape. This closed mouth terrified me even more than the gaping wound and the vitreous eyes. Already I saw that it was a mysterious evidence of something I could not surmise—might never know.

My gaze fell to the floor and I saw the instrument of the crime. It was my mallet, a tool I used in my work, which helped me to bring out of a slab of marble what I had preposterously named "Life."

From the mallet my look traveled toward the white unfinished statue which stood in the centre of the studio. My wife Gabrielle had posed for it. As I stood face to face with the dead model and the marble effigy it seemed, in my confused imagination, that the statue was more lifelike than ever.

I rushed from the studio, calling:

"Evelyne! Polydore!"

Neither my son nor my daughter replied.

I ran quickly up the staircase, fearing another calamity.

I went into my daughter's room. She was lying

on her white-curtained bed and seemed to be asleep. There was not a movement of the muscles. Her face was like wax.

I took her hand in mine. A tiny emerald gleamed in a gold ring on her finger.

"Evelyne! Evelyne!" I called to her.

She did not move, and I saw that she was in a dead faint.

Polydore was not in his room.

I searched every room in the house. He was not to be found. Then I went up in the loft, and I heard coming from the farther corner a prolonged moan. I went forward, groping along with out-stretched hands in the obscure light.

A hot, trembling hand seized mine, while a voice cried:

"Mercy! Mercy!"

A cold perspiration broke out over my body. I thought I saw in the darkness two shining specks which were the eyes of my son. With a firm grip I held the hand, which opposed only a weak resistance, and drew from the dark corner where he was crouching, haggard and trembling, my only son, Polydore.

At this tragic moment I had the extraordinary and singular impression that it was I—I, Barrabas,

whom the good neighbors called "King of Fools" —who was the assassin of my own wife, and that it was I who made my son shake with terror, who had caused the death-like swoon of Evelyne, my little girl. I had not loosed my hold on my son's arm, which I held in a vice-like clasp. I led him to his mother's body.

"Tell me, Polydore, what does it mean?" I demanded.

The big boy of twenty burst into a foolish laugh. It was the laugh of an idiot. Then he lisped:

"Voila! The servant has gone to Nogent to fetch the police."

"But who killed your mother? Who? Who? Speak, Polydore!"

"It was I—and it was not I! Don't clutch my arm so. Your fingers hurt me. They are like a grip of steel. I will explain, and you will understand."

I let go my hold. Polydore staggered like a drunken man.

I seized the hammer, which was sticky with the blood of the unfortunate victim.

"That's it!" cried Polydore. "Strike! Strike! You can never understand. She refused me five louis. Oh! it is an ugly affair, and I swear I did not mean to do it."

For a moment my brain seemed to reel. My forehead seemed as though it would burst. I fell weakly on the sofa and my head dropped in my two hands. Polydore leaned against the wall and sobbed.

What did it mean? My boy, who until now had fulfilled all our hopes, had killed his mother because she had refused him five louis!

He was studying law. We allowed him the small sum of 200 francs a month, and he had always passed among his associates for a model young man. At home he was everything a son should be, and his uncle Marcadian, who had no exaggerated sympathy for me, used to say, jokingly, that the son was as wise as the father was foolish.

Five louis! He knew that he had only to ask me and I would have given him the sum. What did it mean?

I remained dazed, looking at the body stretched at my feet, peered into the unseeing eyes of my dear wife, examined again the horrible wound on the temple, and then as before, it was her livid, contracted lips, her enigmatical mouth which held my gaze. Her mouth seemed to command absolute silence on the crime. To counsel me, to command me, to do what? Something terrible! I could not say, but I must do it. I seemed to understand her

mute appeal and grasp her imperative wish. The command was insinuated in a tightening fold of the mouth—in a fold stamped with a supreme pity, and it was sealed on the lips that were closed forever.

Her love for Polydore was her life, and she showed me clearly with her enigmatical mouth that on the other side of the Valley of Death her mother's heart craved his pardon. In this mute appeal she besought me not to be the accuser of our son and to conspire by all means to save him from the punishment that justice would deal to him. But by what means? All reasoning had left me; my brain was reeling.

"Does Evelyne know the truth?" I asked, in a choking voice.

"She knows all, my son replied.

"And the servant?"

"She knows nothing."

"Then why has she gone to Nogent?"

"Because I told her to go. I said to her: 'Louise, my mother has been assassinated. I found her dead in my father's studio.' "

"You are ready to make your confession before justice and are prepared to undergo the penalty that awaits you?" I asked.

"Yes."

"No punishment can be bad enough," I said, fiercely. I sat down by the bay window which looked out over my pretty garden. What did Gabrielle wish me to do? I thought for a long while, then I got up and went to my desk and wrote the following letter to Maitre Marcadian, the celebrated lawyer, who was my wife's brother—a man whose deep character never could accord with mine:

"My Dear Marcadian:

"I must do justice to myself by saying that I have always loved Gabrielle with a deep love, and when you hear the terrible truth that I have killed her I trust you will have some extenuating circumstances to accord to such an act, which, believe me, was a cruel accident. I have not murdered Gabrielle—I have killed Gabrielle. I must tell you all.

"I had asked my wife to pose for the last time for the statue 'Life' that I have been working upon for the last year. She agreed with her usual complacency, and it was certainly not her fault that she was unable to give expression to her face that I desired. You, who are not an artist and not subject to irrational fits of violence, can scarcely understand the fury which sweeps over us when we struggle in vain with a dream that cannot materialize. It is enough for you to know that in an attack of impulsive fury I threw the hammer that I had in my hand across the studio. It struck Gabrielle on the tem-

ple. Need I swear solemnly to you that it was quite an accident? How can I describe my terror —my feeling of horror—at that moment! Gabrielle was killed. She fell without a cry at the foot of my statue of 'Life.'

"And this quick deed, in which no human wish had collaborated, which occurred solely through the extravagance of an act, maddened me, and if at that moment I had had a weapon in my hand it is certain that in obedience to the same unconscious impulse I should have paid the penalty with my life. I should have done justice. Justice! Yes, my friend, that is a word on which we have not the same ideas. I cannot say more, but I must ask you, in mercy, to be a father to my son Polydore and to my beloved daughter Evelyne.

"It is impossible for me to see either of my children again. I count upon you, the calm, clear-sighted man, who calls me the 'King of the Fools,' to give to my two children the lesson of wisdom which they will need in this life. BARRABAS."

I made a sign to Polydore to approach. "Read this," I said quietly.

He held out a shaking hand. When he had read it the convulsive trembling which shook his body ceased. His eyes regained their calm, innocent look; his voice was firm as he asked:

"What are you going to do?"

"What are you going to do?" I replied.

"Oh, I?" and he shrugged his shoulders, which signified nothing in particular. This new attitude contrasted strangely with his shattered nerves a short while ago. He thought for a moment, then he looked hard at me and said, in a harsh voice:

"Give me five louis."

I was speechless with amazement at these unexpected words. Then he continued in his usual soft voice:

"If you wish me to do justice immediately it will be quite simple. My suicide could be easily attributed to the grief caused by the 'accident' you have invented in your letter. But will a quick suicide, which I am prepared to commit, be a punishment in proportion to the crime? It is not to invoke your clemency, father, that I make a comparison between the unconscious fury which you give as excuse for the accident you invented. And yet for all that—"

"Yes, for all that, you loved your mother."

He moaned like a wounded beast, then said, roughly:

"Give me five louis."

I counted out five pieces of gold and placed them on the table before him. He took them up and carefully put them in an inside vest pocket. Then

he knelt down beside the body of my wife. Frantically he placed his warm lips on his mother's icy lips—on that enigmatical mouth. He made a visible effort to stifle the sobs which rose in his throat.

He rose abruptly and went out without addressing a word of farewell to me.

In my turn I leaned over the face of the beloved companion of my life. Then I recoiled in terror. The contracted lips, which seemed as though they were locked, were loosened under the filial kiss of her assassin, and I imagined I could trace a faint smile, as though to thank me for obeying her secret wish, which beyond death was to save, by any possible means, the child of our flesh and our love. I covered the face that I should never see again with a light piece of silk and left my studio, where the unfinished statue of "Life" stood on its pedestal, immaculately white, a living piece of marble.

I went up to the room where Evelyne still lay unconscious. I took her little hand on which the emerald glistened in its golden setting in my rough hand and drew it reverently to my lips.

"Goodby, my little girl," I said. My love for Evelyne was my life.

I hurried below, for I knew that the servant

might return at any moment. I went quickly to the garage and prepared my automobile. I took enough gasoline for a long journey. Throwing a last look at the little cottage where I had lived for many years, I seized the wheel and started on my way.

CHAPTER II

IN PLACE OF A LAWYER I FIND A CLIENT

I HAVE not written this sincere and veracious account of my extraordinary adventures to justify my irrational conduct. It was irrational, I must admit, but it was prompted solely for the sake of my dead wife. My flight, I now admit, was without reason, without any definite purpose.

I stopped at Lagny to take luncheon. I was calmer now. The fever which had followed my stupor had partly left me and I began to weigh all the consequences of my letter to Marcadian and to face the difficulties with which I should soon find myself surrounded. It was not enough to say "I am going and you will never see me again." My ideas now began to shape themselves, and with the return of common sense I was forced to consider the chances that I had of working out this difficult program.

Even if I were not arrested before the morrow, I had only the insufficient aid of my small machine.

It was not a powerful car, and I began to fear that I should have a breakdown, so great was my speed. Besides, in the event that I could manage to put the frontier between myself and a too curious gendarme, what should I do then? I had only 2,000 francs.

I reached the conclusion that my flight was stupid; that I had, as usual, in the first moment of distraction, obeyed my nerves. So I finally resolved to return to Paris and call on my brother-in-law, Marcadian, and ask his legal advice as to the best course to pursue.

I reached Paris at 4 o'clock and drove hastily to the house at Auteuil, where my brother-in-law, who was a bachelor and a bit of a misanthropist, lived alone with his old servant Joseph, who was devoted to his master.

As soon as the aged servitor saw me he uttered a cry, and, pushing by me, ran as fast as his old legs could carry him down the Rue Michel Ange.

I walked into the house. My brother-in-law was not at home. I judged from the servant's manner that the affair had already become known, and that probably the lawyer had started for my home and that Joseph had rushed off to the police to tell them that I was at Marcadian's house.

I felt annoyed. Something was coming. I decided to await events, so I took a seat in the office and began a cigar.

I had hardly taken the first whiff when a large automobile dashed up to the door.

"Good!" I said to myself. "We're getting busy now."

A voice with a strong foreign accent called out from the hall:

"Hello, there! Anybody at home?"

I was going out to receive the intruder, when, without any ceremony, he pushed open the door.

A veritable giant stood before me, a well-groomed, powerful man, with clean-shaven, ruddy cheeks and a large red rose in his buttonhole.

I made a frigid bow.

"Monsieur," he said, hurriedly, "you are Maitre Marcadian, the best lawyer in Paris, so I hear. I am Addison Kingsley, an American citizen, temporarily resident in Paris. I have an only son, William Kingsley, who is the care of my life. An intelligent youth, and of exemplary conduct, but he is going to dishonor me. And I swear that it shall not be. I'll spend my last dollar to stop such an infamous proceeding. I'll stop at nothing—nothing!"

And he brought his clinched fist down with a bang on the desk beside me. I jumped.

"Monsieur," he continued, after he had taken a chair which I had been too surprised to offer him, "you don't seem to understand how important my errand is."

I was just going to explain I was not Maitre Marcadian and that his affairs did not interest me at all —that I was far too occupied with worries of my own — when the impulsive Yankee jumped up, saying:

"Come to my house now. I'll show you the cause of all this trouble. It is a young girl. Her name is Lucie Weil. Come on! My automobile is outside!"

"Shall I risk it?" I thought. "Marcadian is not here to give his advice, and I have nothing good to hope for when Joseph returns." I took my hat and decided to follow wherever this original millionaire led me, for in the course of his conversation he had explained that he was the head of the giant American Paper Trust and worth a score of millions of dollars.

I jumped into his powerful machine, which was driven by a swarthy-looking chauffeur in faultless livery.

"Bambou! Return!" ordered Kingsley.

"We are going to Neuilly," he said, turning to me. "I have found a neglected property standing alone—just the thing for what I require. You have never heard of my son! Really? William Kingsley, the alienist?"

"What!" I cried, in affright.

After all that had happened to me since early morning a thrill of terror ran through me at this placid utterance of his son's profession.

"He has a lunatic asylum at Saint Mande," he said, calmly. "The house is very well suited for the purpose, but my son would figure there far better as patient than as doctor. My son is eccentric!"

At these words I looked out of the corner of my eyes at my strange companion. As the auto went at full speed it seemed to me that this muscular giant, with the iron-gray hair, deep voice and impulsive gestures was the alienist and I, with my whirling brain, the mad patient.

The car drew up before a massive iron gate, which inclosed the neglected property, surrounded with trees and shrubs growing in wild disorder. I was surprised not to see the house.

We jumped out of the car. A dark-browed Hindoo opened the gate, and while the machine went to

the right, in an alley overgrown with weeds, Mr. Kingsley and I turned to the left and crossed the coppice by a winding path.

Soon we stood before a pretty Louis XVI pavilion, almost hidden under the verdant foliage. In the crumbling façade and the neglected peristyle was a story of one-time splendor run to ruin.

We went into a vast drawing room, with ancient oaken wainscoting. The furniture was limited to pieces that were of absolute necessity—a large walnut table, four worn fauteuils of different Louis periods and a large divan of crimson velvet of no particular epoch. I wondered for what secret reasons Addison Kingsley, the millionaire, had picked out this wild habitation, when he might have been installed in a sumptuous Paris hotel or a palace on the Champs.

"You will stay to dinner, will you not?" he said. "I have much to tell you, and it will take some time. It is a matter of great delicacy."

My strange companion could not have made a more agreeable suggestion. Would I stay to dinner? I replied to his invitation in English, which seemed to please him immensely.

"Ah! Maitre Marcadian, you speak English

with a purity of accent that is unusual on the part of a Frenchman."

"I studied at Oxford," I explained.

"If it were not for your artist's hair and that beard you might be taken for an Englishman," he said. "What a strange individual you are. I should never have imagined you to be a renowned lawyer. You seem to have missed poise. And what an idea of yours to go so far from the center of Paris. You are at the end of the world at Auteuil!"

His manner changed suddenly.

"You will excuse me for receiving you with so little ceremony," he said, courteously; "I have only two East Indians in my service here. I call them Bambou and Jim. They are devoted to me. By the by, would you like to see Mademoiselle Weil?"

"Would it not be better," I interposed, hastily, "for us to dine alone? Then you can tell me all the details of the case."

"Good! Her dinner can be served in her room, and you can see her later. She is extremely pretty; in fact, she is beautiful, but that is no reason——"

The Indian appeared at this moment to announce that the dinner was served, and we passed into the dining-room.

"Well," said my host, after we were seated, "this

is how it stands. My son, the celebrated alienist, is mad—yes, I mean it, mad. He is crazy with love for this girl, who has no fortune, no position. He wants to marry her, but I will prevent it. It is bad enough for him to prefer the stupid life of a savant to a partnership in my business. He seems to have a contempt for my place in the business world."

He tossed off at a gulp his glass of Graves. By the time the second course was brought on I had learned that in order to frustrate a marriage between his son and Mademoiselle Lucie Weil he had kidnaped the girl and shut her up in this lonely house in Neuilly.

I did not doubt for a moment that with a man who preferred Lucie Weil, a little milliner, to an inheritance of millions, the struggle between father and son would not be without excitement. But at the same time I wondered why the millionaire should seek Lawyer Marcadian's advice in the matter.

"If your son is as determined as you are," I said, "and if Mademoiselle shows the same determination, I do not see what you can do. We are in France, monsieur, where there are laws and justice."

The millionaire burst out laughing.

"Laws! Justice! Bah! The one thing we need not count is the little milliner. I have some convincing arguments in reserve for her. The thing is that I must prevent my son, by fair means or foul, from taking this foolish step, and it is about that that I wish to consult you. As for your judicial science and your lawyer's finesse, I don't care that," he said, snapping his fingers. "What do I care for your laws and your justice? What I want to ask you is this: Among your clients or acquaintances, do you happen to know an individual without scruples who would be willing, providing he was well paid, of course, paid largely, to marry Mademoiselle Weil at once?"

I shook my head stupidly.

"You do not know a man, a scoundrel—no, hardly that—just a rascal—to whom we might be of great service?"

I looked at the American with open mouth. A buzzing filled my ears. Did this man come to me in my terrible emergency, representing a tutelary providence? Was it possible that I had met my fate?

I looked at him with fixed eyes.

He got up from the table and took from a desk

at the other side of the room a bundle of papers which he placed before me.

"Look!" he said. "I have everything necessary for an undertaking of this kind. These papers belonged to one of my friends, Charles Douglass, who was accidentally killed some years ago. He came from Boston. I am the only one who knows the story of his life, and I may tell it to you later. Have you the subject well in hand? Now, there is $100,000 for you and $100,000 for the man!"

I bit my lips and replied:

"You ask me to be an accomplice in an infamous undertaking, and my reputation?"

"Who is talking about your reputation?"

"Pardon me, the strict honesty——"

"Fiddlesticks! It is not a question of your honesty, or of mine. Both are outside the question. I am proposing a business deal to you. You are an advocate, are you not?"

"Evidently," I stammered. "You see, monsieur, this is a matter which requires consideration. One hundred thousand dollars for me, $100,000 for the other—am I to understand that?"

"Precisely."

"Very good. Then, in the event that I do not find

the man, and I myself decide to play the role in question, there will be $200,000 for me?"

At my words this man, whom I should have thought nothing could have astonished, looked at me in amazement.

"You!" he ejaculated.

"Yes, I. Now, let us speak a little more to the point. No one was aware that you called upon me at my residence in the Rue Michel Ange, I presume?"

"No one, I swear."

"That is well. Now, whatever consequences may occur from this proceeding, you give me your word of honor that no one will ever know of that visit?"

"Sir, no one shall hear it from my lips. You have my word."

"Are you sure of your servants?"

"As I am of myself. But what is it you are aiming at?"

"This: Henceforth I am Charles Douglass of Boston. Do you understand?"

My host opened his eyes in astonishment.

"Didn't I say that you were an odd individual? Who could imagine that a great lawyer could do a thing like that? To say the least, you are original.

Now, you are my guest. You will sleep here; you will take up your abode here—then you will marry Lucie Weil."

"I will sleep here, I will be your companion—I was going to say your accomplice—I will do all you wish—and I will marry Lucie Weil."

The millionaire's face was radiant in a transport of joy.

"Bravo! Then my son won't get her! Now, come upstairs," he continued, quickly, as if he had just decided about something.

The Hindoo brought the candles, for the night had already fallen, and we went upstairs into one of the front rooms.

My host pushed me toward a long beveled mirror.

"Sit down there, Douglass, my old friend. Look in the glass at your unkempt beard and hair—nice things for an American citizen to have!"

With a sweep of the hand, showing incomparable skill that I had never seen with any barber, I was shorn of my abundant fleece. The cold steel of the scissors got on my nerves, but I was like an automaton without will. It seemed that this man was my executioner—that he was giving the last shave to one condemned to death.

Barrabas, the King of Fools, would be no more!

"There! Are you satisfied, and would you know yourself, Charles?"

I gazed in the mirror at the strange face that looked back at me. The ears, chin, forehead, the shape of the head were strange to me. All my physiognomy had undergone such a complete metamorphosis that I burst into a nervous laugh at the sight of this poor caricature of myself. And the laugh which showed my mouth was not my laugh. It belonged to some one else. It was only the expression of my eyes that had not changed. I turned to my host, who was laughing immoderately. His mirth seemed to me to be rather absurd.

Just then Jim's giant figure stood in the doorway. He gave me a quick, surprised look from beneath his thick black eyebrows and let the porcelain candlestick he held in his hand drop to the floor.

"Attend to your own business, Jim," the millionaire said, sternly, "and show Mr. Charles Douglass to his rooms at once."

CHAPTER III

THE POWER OF THE PRESS

I AM writing this story of my adventures five years after the incidents occurred, and I can still feel the terrible physical and moral tortures that I had to undergo during my painful sacrifice. There is no need to put myself on guard against my imagination. Imagination is pure humbug. The reality far surpasses it, and my adventures which are here truthfully related offer abundant proof of what I assert.

Yes, my memory is as fresh as it was five years ago. I can recall each minute that I passed the first night in the pavilion at Neuilly. I can see the sparsely furnished bed chamber, the great carved bed; I remember the nightmare I had. I had as many terrible dreams as there were hours in the night. An old Normandy clock with brass pendulum stood at the end of the room. There are nights when I still seem to hear its regular ticks and loud chimes—those startling chimes! At each hour they awoke me. They made me start from my sleep.

They cut my nightmare into equal parts. Ah, those dreams! Gabrielle came to me with the hammer in her hand to ask me to account for my falseness and my infamy. Polydore stood beside my bed and asked me for five louis. He wanted five louis to pay for the necessary obsequies for his beloved mother. Then others came—and others.

It was 9 o'clock when I awoke. The sunlight was playing on my bed. Jim came into the room and placed a pot of chocolate and some rolls on the table beside me.

"Have you a morning paper?" I asked.

"Yes, monsieur," he said, handing me a large bundle of newspapers.

When he had gone I locked the door of my room, then took up a paper. On the first page was my portrait, framed in a sensational article, the headlines of which drew my attention at once:

CRIME OR ACCIDENT?

A Letter from Barrabas, the Sculptor—The Victim's Son—The First Witnesses—Strange Contradictions—The Artist's Automobile.

I had only to cut out one of these articles. If they differed a little in form, they were alike in foundation. I have chosen the most accurate:

Is it a mysterious crime or a fatal accident that confronts justice? The tragedy, of whatever nature, remains enveloped in the most profound mystery. The facts are that M. Barrabas, the well-known sculptor, lived at Bry-sur-Marne in a cottage on the route to Noisy-le-Grand with his wife and two children—a son of twenty years, who is studying for the bar, and a daughter of nineteen years. They were a devoted family and were universally liked and esteemed. The tragedy which has occurred in their midst remains more than ever unsolvable.

Madame Barrabas, who is the sister of a high personage in Parisian society, the eminent lawyer Maitre Marcadian, was found dead in her husband's studio from a blow on the temple from the sculptor's hammer, which was found near the body.

The servant of the family, who up to the present is the only one who can give any information of the tragedy, has given the following account:

"I was at the end of the garden," she says, "when M. Polydore rushed toward me, crying out, 'Louise, some one has killed my mother! I have found her dead in my father's studio. Go immediately to Nogent and fetch the police!'

"I was bewildered. I had only left Madame Bar-

rabas a half hour before, and Mademoiselle Evelyne, who was doing her piano practice.

"I went to the studio, and my bewilderment became terror.

" 'Where is mademoiselle?' I cried.

"M. Polydore replied:

" 'She is in her room. It is useless to terrify her. There is time enough for her to know. Go—go quickly!'

"And I ran like mad to Nogent. I passed Mother Carre and Father Tape a l'Oeil and called out to them as I passed. I did not stop."

So the crime, if it is a crime, was committed between the hours of 10 and 10:30. This is an incontestable point. Then the affair takes a strange turn, which somewhat baffles the police.

The commissaire found Madame Barrabas dead in her husband's studio and her daughter in a swoon lying on her bed, but the son, Polydore, had disappeared, and although a search in every direction was immediately started, up to this hour there has been no clue to his whereabouts. As to the husband of the victim, he also has disappeared, and what renders the mystery still more impenetrable, on his desk he left a letter addressed to his brother-in-law, Lawyer Marcadian, in which he states that

he has killed his wife "by accident," and he begs the advocate to look after the interests of his two children, Evelyne and Polydore.

The field remains open to all hypotheses, and the contradictory statements have accumulated since the opening of the inquest with such rapidity that one is reduced to the most extraordinary conjectures.

According to the declaration of Madame Carre and her neighbors, it was they who broke the news to M. Barrabas as he was returning home on his way from the Marne, where he had been fishing for several hours. This proves, then, that the sculptor was not at home when the crime or accident took place. So the letter that he wrote to Lawyer Marcadian is incomprehensible. What is the reason of his flight? The daughter, who regained consciousness after some hours, affirmed that she knew nothing whatever about the tragedy, except that her brother told her that he had found her mother dead in the studio. It appears that the shock was so violent that she fell into the syncope from which only extreme measures aroused her.

The government seals have been affixed, and the inquest will continue. The Chef de la Surete has sent two of his most efficient operatives to Bry-sur-Marne.

Puh! That did not teach me much. It was so much stuffing!

Nevertheless, I heaved a sigh of relief. Evelyne had had the presence of mind to remain silent, the perspicacity to read between the lines of my letter the plans which at the time I wrote it I myself had been incapable of formulating.

I turned the pages of the paper to that reserved for the latest news. There I read:

"Instead of clearing, the mystery of Bry-sur-Marne increases. Yesterday afternoon about 5 o'clock M. Barrabas drove up in his automobile to his brother-in-law's home, in the Rue Michel Ange. In the absence of Lawyer Marcadian, who had started for Bry, the servant, who had heard of the tragedy, under the influence of a natural stupefaction, let the sculptor enter the house, and rushed to the commissaire to inform the police of the whereabouts of the victim's husband. When the man returned, accompanied by the Sergent de Ville, the automobile still stood before the door, but M. Barrabas had escaped. Another important fact, Lawyer Marcadian received a letter from his nephew, Polydore, stating 'that in view of the terrible accident, and knowing his father's intention, which was not to survive the victim of such a fatality, he had taken

are not a lawyer; you are an artist. I said you were an odd individual. Look at those ridiculous full trousers you wear and that squashed hat and the La Valliere necktie. Hereafter you must show more taste in your dress, Douglass. A respectable American citizen would not dress like that!"

He spread before me a complete suit of clothes of the newest cut. On the chair he had placed a modish hat, a white shirt and tan shoes.

I jumped out of bed.

"That's right; go and make your ablutions. I'll smoke a cigar while I wait."

I was soon dressed in my new outfit. When I was ready Mr. Kingsley looked hard at me for a moment, then said:

"Are you not a little short-sighted?"

"I am," I replied, "but my vanity would never let me wear glasses."

"I have thought of everything," he said. "Try these and see the effect."

He opened a case and drew out a pair of gold-rimmed spectacles. He slipped the thin gold wires over my ears.

"It's marvelous!" he said, admiringly. "And then, in the bargain, you speak English like Conan Doyle," he chuckled. "Now luncheon is ready, and

Mademoiselle Lucie must be getting impatient."

As I entered the dining room I saw a lovely girl, with bright, bold eyes. She was filling the crystal vases with brilliant masses of flowers. She had arranged a garland of roses on the table cloth with a pretty taste of harmony. She turned and greeted me with a charming smile and bow.

CHAPTER IV

LUCIE WEIL

FOR fifteen days I had lived in seclusion in the mysterious house in Neuilly, but I could not flatter myself that I knew my host any better. I met him only at meal times. He still remained to me as inexplicable as ever, and it was not from the two Hindoos, with their stupid, sempiternal "moussir," that I could hope to get any enlightenment. As to Lucie Weil, to whom Jim acted as keeper, she did not enjoy the freedom that I did. She occupied a room adjoining mine, but the windows were provided with sturdy iron bars. She was forbidden to walk in the park, and she could scarcely walk from her room to the drawing room without having Jim at her heels. He had received orders to raise the alarm if she should attempt to escape. But she seemed to entertain no such chimerical design.

She was a very beautiful girl, with clear, regular features, a charming mouth—soft and red. She seemed neither particularly worried nor satisfied

with her position. Her attitude was one of almost indifference. It was clear to me that she knew the part that I was to play in regard to her, although we had never been able to exchange words on the subject, for Jim was always in constant attendance. I had noticed from her manner of observing me that my physique did not impress her favorably, and she must have been equally aware from my manner that I was not at all anxious to make a conquest.

That particular day Mr. Kingsley had left us soon after luncheon. He had arisen from the table, his face purple with the heat of the old wines and strong liqueurs of which he had drunk abundantly. He was extremely satisfied with himself, and before going out he said, slapping me on the back:

"It's rolling on wheels, Charles, my boy. I have made all the arrangements at the embassy, and the banns will be published tomorrow in the town hall at Neuilly."

He went out, rubbing his hands.

I remained seated opposite Mademoiselle Lucie in the large salon, with its antiquated furniture. She was lying on the velvet sofa.

"Well," she said, in a languid, caressing voice. "Well, Mr. Douglass, are you still of a mind to play this little comedy?"

"Yes, as decided as you are undecided."

"What profit do you expect to draw from it?"

I coughed. She continued:

"You do not expect, I should hope, that I could ever be your wife. If so, my poor friend, you have never looked in a mirror."

Mon Dieu! I thought, what an odd being. She is an enigma. I don't know this young man who is so madly in love with her, and I scarcely know his father, but I am quite certain that neither of them knows the girl they are dealing with.

I opened my newspaper in order to cut short such a disagreeable conversation. I was a little annoyed at her words. I began to read.

"There you are with your usual polite manners," she said in a hurt tone, pouting her lips. "Put your paper down and talk to me. What interest have you in this affair? You are paid, are you not?"

"Enormously."

"Then we might come to some arrangement. I love William Kingsley. I knew him when he was a student in the Latin Quarter. I am only a little milliner, but I am honest, and I love him with all my heart. He asked me to marry him. Together we saw a rose-colored future. All his friends in the Quarter made love to me, but they did not in-

"TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS."

Page 47.

terest me. I only cared for William. I adore him. Now, you are not enraptured with my charms. No, no! I can tell you have other preoccupations. Well, something can be arranged. I have been thinking of it for fifteen days. Mr. Kingsley is a man who could not possibly understand love. It is true I love William, but I also love my life. And you know the millionaire——"

"To prevent a marriage between you and his son, would commit a crime. I do not doubt it," I said.

"That's it! He would stop at nothing. So, you understand, I am twenty years old, and I love life. That is the situation."

"And you do not love William?" I said.

"Oh, yes, indeed! But my life comes first, all the same."

What an odd creature! And what an imbecile William must be! An intelligent man blinded by his passion, I thought.

The girl thought deeply for a moment, then she said, suddenly:

"How much is Mr. Kingsley giving you for this affair?"

"Two hundred thousand dollars."

"What?"

"Two—hundred—thousand—dollars."

"How many francs is that?"

"A million."

Her eyes opened wide with greed.

"Mon Dieu!" she ejaculated, "and he offered me only 50,000 francs." She frowned, and her beautiful bright eyes assumed a hard expression.

"A million! A million!" she repeated. Then with an exquisite movement of modesty and of charming abandon she came across and sat down beside me. Just then Kingsley pushed open the door. At sight of the tableau he gave a pleased laugh.

"My! What a nice couple you make!" he cried.

I profited by his entrance to go off and have a quiet smoke in the park. The millionaire's confidence was limited to my interest. My interest was to stay as long as possible in this retreat, where it was hardly likely anyone would search for me. Occasionally I ventured outside the grounds. With the radical change effected by the suppression of my beard and long hair, the addition of the spectacles, to which I had now become accustomed, and a certain uprightness in my walk which I had gained from daily contact with the American, I could well defy anyone to recognize me. Nevertheless, Addison Kingsley was always anxious when

I went outside the gates. One day he drew me aside and said:

"Douglass, you must be more prudent. I should be only too pleased to see you enjoy your freedom like others—go to the cafes, the music halls and stroll along the boulevards. Even though you might not be recognized, you run a great risk. I know, of course, with Charles Douglass' papers in your pocket and, above all, my word that you are Douglass in flesh and blood, you could easily prove that you are not Barrabas, but it is a great risk. Listen! Suppose, for instance, you catch a good black varioloid. It is for your interest, my friend, that I make the suggestion—a severe varioloid, that would disfigure your face entirely."

"Mais, mon Dieu!" I cried, startled out of my senses. "Are you mad?"

"I am speaking for your good; not for my own," he said, angrily. "What do I gain if you catch a black varioloid. I suppose—ah! I have an idea—I will tell you later—after, when you are married to Lucie Weil."

"Yes, yes; tell me later," I said, relieved to get away from the abominable project.

I thought that Addison Kingsley's fears were groundless. With the fluent way I chatted Eng-

lish, my American clothes, clean-shaven face, even my expression, which had quite changed now because of the gold-rimmed glasses; then the identification papers of Douglass in my pocket—why, I defied my best friend to recognize me.

So I went into the park to smoke my pipe—a little pipe of rosewood that Kingsley had given me as a present. The weather was glorious—a soft, mellow afternoon in September—one of those days when one sees the summer dying slowly, opposing as long as it can the approach of autumn. I was standing near the iron gate when a carriage drew up to the pavement. I was glued to the spot! I was seized with a stupefaction that can readily be understood, for I saw my brother-in-law, Lawyer Marcadian, step out of the carriage.

I had not time to turn round. He came up to me.

"Pardon, monsieur," he said, "does Mr. Kingsley live here?"

"Oui, monsieur," I replied, with a calm that was so much more convincing since it was caused through the numbness of a half syncope that came over me.

CHAPTER V

DOUGLASS LISTENS TO WHAT INTERESTS BARRABAS

MARCADIAN and Addison Kingsley made a striking antithesis. The millionaire, a giant of ruddy complexion and athletic form; the lawyer, a short, thin man with sharp silhouette, white hair and white beard framing a thin face. But to hear Marcadian's precise and insidious voice in smart repartee—a voice with fine modulations—and then the harsh, imperative voice, without intonation whatever, of Kingsley—it was then that one felt the superiority of the dignified little advocate to the apoplectic, boisterous master of the house.

Marcadian had not recognized me. I had followed him closely up the pathway. It seemed that I was being pushed in his wake by an invisible power. The man seemed to bring with him something of my wife, something of my son and something of my beloved daughter. And all prudence, all thought of the risk I ran vanished before the

impetus which I obeyed. Nevertheless, at an angry look from Addison Kingsley I went to the end of the room and sat down at a little table before the bay window, turning my back to them both.

I pretended to be absorbed in some documents I held in my hand, but I took good care not to lose a word of their conversation.

In his usual complacent manner, Marcadian had crossed one leg over the other and fixed his eyeglasses on his nose, after having carefully cleaned the lenses.

"Mr. Kingsley," he began, in his business-like tones, "I have put off this visit for a long time for two reasons. The first is of a particular nature and relates to a family affair, which has absorbed me completely for the last fifteen days; the second is that a lawyer like I am is not accustomed to put himself out and occupy himself with a case so insignificant in appearance as this which forms the object of my visit."

This preamble was delivered in such a manner as to cause Kingsley and me to open our eyes in astonishment. To discuss a case—an insignificant case in appearance! His words seemed to me the acme of irony.

My host sat looking at the lawyer with fixed

eyes. He was scenting danger. It was clear that he thought, as I did, that his visit to the Rue Michel Ange was known and that probably the police were on the track.

But the lawyer's next words destroyed this hypothesis:

"As I said, one reason for my visit is of an intimate character—a case in which the lawyer must efface himself in order to let the man himself speak. To begin with, Mr. Kingsley, I must tell you that I am the lawyer who has charge of your son's interests."

"My son's lawyer, you, Maitre Marcadian!" the millionaire exclaimed in wonder.

He was surprised at the unexpected turn the lawyer's talk had taken.

I took a deep breath. It seemed as though a great weight had been lifted from my chest. I knew that my brother-in-law could not understand English, so I profited by it by calling out to Mr. Kingsley, in a careless voice, without looking up from my papers:

"Ask him about the affair of intimate character."

"Each thing in its turn," replied Kingsley.

"We can speak?" asked the lawyer, suspiciously.

The foreign language seemed to embarrass him.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Charles Douglass is one of my best friends. You may speak freely. You were saying——"

"That your son, Dr. William Kingsley, has decided to employ every means which the law offers to put an end to the arbitrary sequestration of which Lucie Weil is the victim. I presume, sir, that you are ignorant of the rigor of the law, and it is painful to see a son use it against his own father."

Kingsley burst out laughing in the lawyer's face.

"Ah! So you are charged with my son's interests. Is it to his interest to marry Lucie Weil?"

"That is a matter of sentiment. I must reserve decision on that point," said the lawyer.

"Very well. But you speak of sequestration. There is no sequestration. You can put yourself at ease on that score in five minutes. Take the trouble to go as far as the Neuilly town hall. There you will see the banns published, conformably with the law, for the marriage of Charles Douglass, of Boston, my old friend, who is here present, and Mademoiselle Lucie Weil, who is a very practical young lady. She now considers a dowry of 1,000,000 francs preferable to the empty hand of a poor alienist; that is all."

I had half turned round, and I saw Marcadian take off his glasses and wipe them nervously.

"That," he said, "is a most advantageous solution. I will inform my client."

"Tell your client also that he is making a grave mistake in resorting to law over so simple an affair, and the best thing that he can do for his complete pacification is to come here and converse with his happy rival."

"Just so. I am delighted, delighted—more than I can possibly tell you. If I could only tell you why I am personally delighted, but I cannot. I—we—that is to say——"

I turned round and looked at Marcadian. What could make him so nervous? What was he faltering about? He was always so lucid and self-possessed. What sentiments could he be hiding to show agitation before strangers? He was certainly in a great state of nervous excitement.

The millionaire at once put his emotion down to the grief he had suffered lately through the tragedy in his family.

"I know, my dear sir," he said. "Like everyone else, I have heard of the terrible trouble you have had recently. The press did not say all, did it?"

"What more would you have it say?"

"But the police?"

"The police! Ah! You want the wonder-workings of a Sherlock Holmes—some thrilling stories to dream about. Why do you expect the police to be more intelligent than the assassin? Have you ever seen a player who holds in his hand the strongest trump card (which is the case of the assassin, because he knows what the other is charged to discover) attempt to lay down his double cards to give his opponent the game?

"Do you know, Mr. Kingsley," he continued, warming up to the subject, "that the established statistics on 100 known crimes—you understand me, known crimes—the average statistics of the crimes discovered is 26—I repeat, 26; that of these 26 there are 12 of them where the criminal is unmasked by being caught in the act—12!—and finally, of these 12, nine—I repeat nine—are confessed by the criminals. In the last analysis, then, we have a modest 3 per cent credited to the energy of the police."

He coughed and made a pause.

"Now, is it necessary," he continued, "for me to tell you that for 100 known crimes, which are founded on the disappearance of persons, one can estimate at 300 those which will never be discov-

ered? Ought I to add that for 300 disappearances there are as many, perhaps, of which the police are not aware? Then we can conclude that of 700 murders committed the budget for public protection serves to discover three of them. Yes, three, Mr. Kingsley. But I know well enough that it is not with figures that exciting stories are made."

I could scarcely believe it was Lawyer Marcadian talking. Kingsley, who did not care about figures, tried to change the conversation.

"There may be, perhaps, some interesting stories to tell in the fate of Barrabas, the sculptor—the man whom the people called the King of Fools. Ah! but they had a sense of humor!"

"The sense of humor of those people and the perspicacity of the detectives are on a par. Barrabas, whom I know better than anyone, was a man of sense."

"A man of sense!" cried Kingsley. "You cannot make me believe that. I should imagine he was a big fool. Was he innocent or guilty?"

"He is innocent. There is not the shadow of a doubt," said Marcadian.

"Hum!" coughed Kingsley. "He may be, or he may not. Then one is forced to believe it was the son, Polydore?"

"Polydore is innocent."

"You have too personal an interest in the matter to be impartial."

"I believe that Polydore is innocent, because his father has taken the guilt from his son and is carrying the cross on his own shoulders."

"Then you think the son really did kill his mother?"

"I do not think that Polydore is guilty as far as the crime goes. I believe it was a terrible accident —more terrible than that invented by the husband. But what am I saying?" He pressed his hands to his forehead.

"My brother-in-law was a model husband," he continued, "Polydore the most devoted of sons. My poor sister is not the only victim. There is the young daughter, whom I have taken to live with me. Barrabas knows what he is about, and I know my duty."

Was this Marcadian the brother of my dear Gabrielle? His sympathy on my account came as a surprise. I did not expect it from a character so stern and strait-laced. And from his vague manner of expressing himself as regards the tragedy, I could see that he had understood the secret meaning of the mystery, and, above all, my reason for disap-

pearing, and from the depth of my heart I felt an extreme gratitude to this man who defended me and defended Polydore, and, above all, defended his slain sister.

As he got up to go I saw him hastily brush his hand across his eyes. For one weak moment I almost lost my self-control. I wanted to rush to him and say "I am Barrabas. Do you know me, Marcadian?"

As Mr. Kingsley walked with his visitor to the hall he asked:

"Have you been occupied with my son's affairs long?"

"Since the day after the tragedy. I could hardly center my mind on business at such a moment, but he was so anxious that I should take up the case."

"And do you see him often?"

Marcadian appeared rather embarrassed by the question.

"Every day," he replied, after a moment's hesitation. "Mutual unhappiness creates a bond of instinctive sympathy, you know. I have grown very fond of your son. He comes to play a game of bridge at my home almost every evening. Goodbye. I promise you I will do all in my power to

bring him to realize that he cannot marry Mademoiselle Weil."

"Tell him," said Kingsley, "that I am looking forward to a visit from him, and don't forget to tell him also that Lucie Weil will be married to Mr. Douglass very shortly, and that she is delighted with the rich marriage she is making. It is Mr. Charles Douglass. Don't forget the name—Douglass from Boston. He will know what that means. That will bring him to his senses more than all the arguments you and I could make put together."

When he had gone my host came and stood before me and looked me full in the face.

"Then you are not the murderer?" he said.

I made no reply.

"What a pity!"

Then, changing the thread of his conversation, he continued:

"He did not recognize you—not even the voice. It is true your voice shook with emotion.

"Charles," he continued, after a pause, using my assumed first name, "I shall be much more at rest if you catch that black varioloid I spoke about. It is better to be too cautious than not enough. I wonder if one could graft a lupus on the face. I should

think it could be done. A lupus! Something horrible and lasting——"

I suppose I must have paled at this gruesome suggestion, for he shrugged his shoulders and said, disdainfully:

"You people of the Old World have no courage whatever. You do not understand what is for your own good, or, when you do, you hesitate to make the necessary sacrifice."

And he persisted, his voice taking a kindly tone:

"Come, come, Charles. I said a skin disease, a lupus, or any other means of disfiguration, so that it would be radical and lasting."

CHAPTER VI

THE ALIENIST ASTONISHES BARRABAS AND DOUGLASS AT THE SAME TIME

EACH day Addison Kingsley seemed to lose a little of his presumptuous good humor, and I began to dread with increasing terror the day when I should have to go before an officer of the civil state and declare I, Charles Douglass, an American citizen, from Boston, of my own will, took to be my wife Lucie Weil, a girl of whom I knew nothing. I had thought, and earnestly hoped, that something would happen to withdraw this bitter chalice from my lips. Was I to be forced to drain it to the dregs?

The alienist had not yet called. We thought it strange that the natural impatience of a young man to see the object of his passion had not made him come at once.

Mademoiselle and I had made no progress in our courtship. We continued to look at each other like a pair of china dogs, but as the eventful day drew nearer she seemed to gain in frivolity what Kings-

ley and I lost in confidence. She was entirely taken up with the details of her trousseau. Kingsley had ordered everything on a sumptuous scale, but I was too uneasy about the marriage itself to give any attention to the preliminaries. They could have married me in my shirt sleeves. It would have been all the same to me. The awful fact was that I was going to be married. I was still hoping that the alienist would come and snatch the girl out of his father's clutches.

"Very likely your son did not care as much for Lucie as you thought. Perhaps he is now having the laugh on you. I don't see why you take this extreme step," I suggested to Kingsley.

"There is something that you do not happen to know. My son can treat the affair in an off-hand manner if he likes, but he cannot laugh at Charles Douglass. He will have to be careful. I have more than one card up my sleeve," was the reply.

"If he is not so interested in Mademoiselle Lucie, as you think, then there will be no occasion for me to marry her," I ventured to say.

"Imbecile!" he said, shrugging his shoulders, "this is an affair you do not understand. You don't know what you are talking about. I know that my son simply worships that girl, and he will never love

any other girl but her. Why, man, she is a beauty, if ever there was one. She has a look in her eyes that would drive some men wild. You leave it to me, and don't talk of things you know nothing about."

"I know," I began.

"You know? You know what? Do you know that in marrying Lucie Weil, in establishing a new identity, the half of my great fortune goes from me. There is one thing I cannot understand. William knows the story of Charles Douglass' life, and I cannot understand why he does not try to prevent this young girl from marrying him. I tell you, my son drives me mad!"

He went out, slamming the door after him.

I have said that my room adjoined Lucie's. I heard Kingsley go into her apartment. I could hear their voices raised in an angry discussion, although it was impossible for me to distinguish what they said. My mind was absorbed in a simple question of figures. I was puzzled. I asked myself again and again why this astonishing price on my miserable person?

My adventures were beginning to take fantastic proportions. What interested me most just at this moment and what I most desired to learn more

about was this mysterious Douglass whom I was impersonating.

Alas! I could not foresee that from the day when I learned his real history I should then consider that all that had happened up to now was child's play.

It was 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I was looking dreamily out of my window at the golden sun behind the high foliage of the park. I was quietly enjoying the hour, when Jim stalked into the room. He had evidently run up the staircase with much precipitation, for he was out of breath. His eyes flashed. He was inwardly excited.

"'Moussir,'" he said, "the other 'moussir' is downstairs."

"Who?"

"The other 'moussir,' Dr. Kingsley. Come down quickly!"

I hastily obeyed this injunction. My curiosity was on the *qui vive*. I went quickly to the drawing-room, and I saw at once that Kingsley was not aware that I had been informed of his son's arrival. He turned round at my entrance and said, angrily:

"I wish to speak alone with my son, Mr. Douglass."

"Excuse me, father," said a tall young man, who stood calm and erect in the middle of the room, holding his silk hat in his hand. "Mr. Douglass is welcome here. He is qualified to hear all that I have to say; in fact, his presence is necessary."

"Not at all," cried his father, looking at me, then at the door.

"Pardon me," said the son, calmly, "then all I have to say is that if Mr. Douglass does not remain I have nothing to say to you."

He bowed to us both, and said, coolly:

"As you like, gentlemen."

"Charles," hurled Kingsley, putting his hands on my shoulders and making me spin round brusquely before he pushed me into a chair with springs that squeaked every time I moved, "Charles, my friend and partner, you know that the quarrel that separated us for so many years is ended. We have both agreed to forget the past. Your honor is pledged. I forbid you to reply to any questions from my son."

I did not know of any quarrel or any agreement, and my honor had nothing to do with the question, but I read in the millionaire's look a command that I was not to make any breaks or meddle in what

concerned Douglass' past life, of which up to the present I, Barrabas, was ignorant.

"Yes, yes, the past is forgotten, my friend. We will never mention it again," I said, cheerfully, playing my part.

"Oh! Mr. Douglass," the young doctor said, smiling pleasantly at me, "I have thought of you so often all these long years. You cannot imagine what great pleasure I have in meeting you again. Do you remember how you used to hold me on your knees when I was a child? Since my mother died, twenty years ago, after your accident, I have thought of you continually. I thank heaven that you escaped and that I see you again, alive and well."

"Talk about Lucie Weil," interrupted his father, hastily.

"Very well, talk of mademoiselle," said the alienist, with a shade of bitterness in his voice. "I understand, father, that you object to my marrying a little work girl without education, and Lawyer Marcadian tells me that you have settled a dowry on her and she is willing to break our engagement and marry Mr. Douglass. You and Mr. Douglass have certainly devised a sure means to prevent me from marrying her. But why go

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to such extreme measures? Lucie is a beautiful girl. I thought I loved her, and she probably thought she loved me. Evidently we have both been mistaken in our sentiments. Our love is not very strong if it cannot stand a test. It is useless to push the matter any farther. I should have come to see you before about this, but my time has been very much taken up with other things. Tell mademoiselle that I give her back her freedom."

"To-morrow Mr. Douglass is going to marry her."

"But why? I tell you, father, there is no danger that I shall fight for her. Settle some money on her, if that is what she wants and you wish to do so, but for Mr. Douglass to marry her so as to save me is absurd."

I heaved a sigh of relief. Thank God, I had escaped that girl! I was free from the millionaire; his ruse was now useless. I was free from that indolent little creature, whose only thought was to get a large dowry.

The young doctor, in the affectionate greeting he had given me, had astonished Douglass, but soon, in another way, he was going to astonish Barrabas.

He turned to his father and said, quietly:

"I must thank you now, father, for the great service that you have rendered me in kidnapping Lucie and in opposing a union which most certainly would not have brought me happiness. I know that you intended to disinherit me, which would not have worried me at all. You know my absolute indifference toward money. I thought I really cared for Lucie, and had it not been for you hiding her from me I should probably think so now, but certain things have occurred since which show me my error."

"I congratulate you," chuckled Kingsley, who, with his thumbs stuck in the armholes of his waistcoat, listened to his son's tirade with evident satisfaction.

"Don't congratulate me too quickly. I love another woman."

"Eh! What's that?" cried the millionaire, jumping out of his chair.

"Yes," said the young man, calmly, "I love another. She is a beautiful girl, and this time you will have no reason to object to my choice. She is a charming girl, and her soul and character are as beautiful as her face. I must tell you that I have been visiting continually for the last month

at Lawyer Marcadian's house, and I love his niece, Evelyne Barrabas!"

The alienist did not notice the emotion that swept over me. Addison Kingsley's agitation was as great as mine.

The millionaire and I looked at each other with open mouths. We remained speechless. He was the first to recover his self-possession. He shook himself and whistled his amazement. Then he placed his two hands on my shoulders, and looking full at me, said:

"What d'ye think of that, Charles, my boy?"

"It—it requires—thinking over," I stammered.

The millionaire thought for a moment. Then suddenly picking up his hat, said:

"William, my son, I will go with you and call on Mr. Marcadian. He seemed to have some game up his sleeve when he came here. I am curious to see your fiancée. First it is a little Paris milliner, Lucie Weil. Now it is the daughter of a murderer whom you offer me for a daughter-in-law—and you an alienist!"

"Her father is innocent," protested the young man, warmly.

Kingsley shrugged his shoulders without replying, then went into the hall to get his cane.

The young doctor profited by his absence to come to me quickly. He grasped my two hands with warmth, and said, in a low voice:

"Oh! father, father, how happy I am to have found you again. Alive! How often have I thought of you!"

It seemed for the moment that the blood left my veins as I listened to his strange and terrifying words. I, his father!

CHAPTER VII

THE MURDER OF LUCIE WEIL

SEATED on a bench alone, behind a grove of elm trees—my favorite spot in the park—I rested my elbows on my knees, my head in my hands, and tried to pull my confused ideas together.

This new turn that affairs had taken by the move the alienist had made was not calculated to reassure me. At first I had felt a great joy to think that suddenly, without preparation, Evelyne's future was assured. She met her fate the day after the terrible tragedy, which might have separated her from all conventional people. It seemed like a miracle—almost as great a piece of luck as that which had brought about my meeting with Kingsley at Marcadian's house. Truly, a miracle more or less in the strange situation in which I was now placed ought not to astonish me.

I soon saw that the American was not at all satisfied with this second choice his son had made. He could not use the same arguments as he had

against Lucie Weil, but those that he did use were just as strong.

One thing was certain—I was more than ever at the mercy of this man.

Ah! if that crafty Marcadian had told us the match-making he was up to, and how things were going at his home, Kingsley and I together could have found a satisfactory way out of it for everyone. Now there was no danger of William's changing. He was determined to marry Evelyne. It was a brutal ultimatum that he had put before his father. The latter was ready to rise up again. If he did, all the diplomacy I had used would avail me nothing. I should have to resign myself to the inevitable catastrophe which awaited me. I should surely be discovered, and the ingenuity that I had employed in disappearing, so as to cast an unfathomable mystery over my poor wife's death, would be of no use.

My mind was overshadowed with the darkest apprehensions. I tried to wait patiently for Kingsley's return. I got up from my seat and walked along the shaded avenues. I reached the iron gate, and was just turning to go out when a heavy hand was placed on my shoulder. It was Bambou!

"You must not go out, sir," he said, smiling.

So Kingsley had given orders to the Indian to watch me. I turned, without a word, and walked back to the house.

I went to the library and tried to get interested in the pages of Poe. I was unfortunate, for the first thing I read was the passage from Morella:

And then, when poring over forbidden pages, I felt a forbidden spirit enkindling within me. Then would Morella place her cold hand upon my own, and rake up from the ashes of a dead philosophy some low, singular words, whose strange meaning burned themselves in upon my memory. And then, hour after hour, would I linger by her side, and dwell upon the music of her voice, until at length its melody was tainted with terror, and there fell a shadow upon my soul, and I grew pale and shuddered inwardly at those too unearthly tones, and thus joy suddenly faded into horror and the most beautiful became the most hideous, as Hinnon became Ge-henna.

I threw the book down. No, no! Gabrielle was not Morella!

Just then, to make a diversion to my permanent anxiety, the tailor came, bringing with him a new coat of the latest cut for me, and with him came the dressmaker with the white satin gown and the bridal veil for Lucie Weil.

This reminder drew from me a bitter smile of self-pity.

I took up the book again and turned over the leaves absently. I was commencing the story called "Metzgerstein." I was going from bad to worse. The first lines annoyed me.

"Horror and fatality have been stalking abroad in all ages."

Soon the dinner bell rang, and Addison Kingsley had not returned. Bambou had set the table in the dining-room for one person only.

"And mademoiselle?" I asked.

The man made a curious sound which seemed to express a sigh of relief.

"Mademoiselle Lucie!" He pointed up to her window as though to say she had probably flown away like a bird from its cage.

Kingsley did not return until quite late. One can imagine that I had no wish to sleep and that I should have waited up for him all night. To my great surprise, he was most calm; in fact, I had never seen him so placid. Instead of being reassured, I began to feel vaguely troubled.

"Ah, so you waited up for me, Charles. Very amiable, I'm sure."

Bambou took his coat and hat from him. I looked

at him under the lamplight. This man of continual exasperations wore the mask of repose of a disconcerting calmness.

He placed two little packages carefully upon the table. As the Indian put out his hand to arrange them, he shouted:

"Don't touch them!"

He followed the man to the door and gave him some orders in a low voice. I could not hear a word. Then he came back and sat down opposite me.

"Well," he began, "it is perfect. I have seen your daughter. She is charming, very distinguished, well educated. This time it would be cruel to try to oppose William's wishes. This is the happiness of his life—his and yours!"

I was speechless with amazement.

"Do not be astonished too quickly," he continued, "at seeing me submit so quietly to this second choice my son has made. I have a plan—a very deep plan—which you will see unraveled as we go along. You and I thoroughly understand each other. You belong to me, body and soul!"

I bent my head in assent.

"That being understood, I am willing to promote your happiness, and also your daughter's.

That is all that I can say at present. Later I may say more. Now go and sleep on the good news that I have brought you. It ought to fill your heart with pride."

Bambou reappeared with a lamp to light me to my room.

"What about the wedding to-morrow," I said as my host bade me good-night. "What have you decided upon?"

"Oh! that will not come off. I have altered my plans." And he added, emphasizing each word, "Lucie Weil no longer counts. She no longer exists, or, to speak more plainly, she is like Barrabas, like his son Polydore; she is as though she were dead."

The marrow of my bones turned cold. The imperturbability of this man terrified me far more than his attacks of fury. I recalled what Lucie had said: "That man is capable of anything." And I remember I replied: "He would even commit a crime."

And more bewildered than ever, I went to my room, guided by Bambou and the light.

I was disagreeably surprised to find that the man had locked my door behind him. What did it all mean?

It was a beautiful night. In the dark blue vault of heaven myriads of stars twinkled and flashed. I walked to the window to look out at the beauty of the moonlit skies and to think over what I had first thought to be my daughter's happiness.

And then I thought of Polydore. The police could find no traces of him, so perhaps after all he had taken his own life: It were better so. And then I thought of Gabrielle—dear Gabrielle. All my life I knew I should keep a pious souvenir of her—a thought of affectionate pity and regret.

How long I remained thus with my elbows on the window sill I have no clear knowledge. I must have been there about an hour, when the sound of a voice raised in anger came from the room adjoining, which had always been occupied by Lucie Weil. I quickly closed the window and listened.

Bambou had tried to make me believe she had gone away. Kingsley also, by his manner, had led me to believe so. Now I distinctly heard the millionaire's voice and Lucie's sharp soprano voice, which rose to a high pitch as their quarrel grew more violent.

Suddenly I heard the sounds of a scuffle. They were struggling! I heard the fall of a body on the

floor, then a loud cry in the night—a cry of unspeakable anguish, coming from a strangled throat. Then I distinctly heard the terrifying words:

"Help! Help!"

Then, above the tumult, Lucie's piercing voice shrieked the supreme call:

"Murder! Murder!"

The cry expired in her throat.

All was silent.

My hearing had now attained the sensibility of a microphone. I could hear a low groaning, then a rattling in the throat. I could not have made any illusion on the ghastly crime which surely had passed on the other side of the partition between an unscrupulous man like Addison Kingsley and a little work girl of no importance like Lucie Weil. There, a few steps from me, in this deserted house, a woman without defense had been murdered.

I sprang with clinched fists to my door, which Bambou had locked. I shook it with all my strength. It was useless. I understood now why Bambou had locked it.

An overpowering need to call came to me, a wish to cry with all my might: "Help! Help! A woman is being murdered!" But my voice could no more find an echo in the dense foliage of the

park in this isolated house than the expiring cry of Lucie Weil.

The stars above in the heavens were the only eyes that looked down upon the ghastly crime!

I opened the window and at a glance measured the height from the ground.

It was possible. I snatched the sheets from my bed and tied them to the iron support. The horror of the moment gave me double strength. I let myself slide down to the height of the cornice of the second floor. I calculated my spring and jumped to the lawn. I rushed round the house to the kitchen entrance, where I saw a light burning.

Under the shadow of a tree I saw Lucie's keeper, Jim. I went up to him. He was quivering with rage. His face was covered with blood and his eyes starting from the sockets.

"Jim!" I cried. "Jim, what has happened?"

"Oh, moussir, moussir! The villain!" His rage choked him. He turned from me and strode away down the dark avenue of the park.

I ran to the kitchen door and thumped with my fists on the panels.

"Who is there?" called out the other Hindoo.

I answered. Bambou recognized my voice and

opened the door. His disconcerting placidity contrasted singularly with Jim's terror.

I rushed in. Addison Kingsley was there. He was leaning over the kitchen sink, washing his hands, which were red with blood. He turned round and said to me, calmly:

"Where did you spring from, Charles?"

The expression on my face must have been one of abject horror. I pointed my forefinger at him and cried out in a voice tremulous with indignation:

"You villain! You have killed Lucie Weil!"

At this accusation he remained a moment confused. He took a minute for reflection. He wiped his hands slowly on the kitchen towel. Then in a harsh voice, and looking me full in the eyes, he said, cynically:

"Did I ever reproach you for killing your wife?"

CHAPTER VIII

THAT WHICH FOLLOWED

THIS chapter that I am going to write is not the most sorrowful account of my adventures, and yet, in beginning it, I experience a sensation that resembles fear—a kind of retrospective terror.

It is curious that after five years I cannot find any other words to express it—I have a physical memory of that horrible night. Even now I feel again the terror creeping over me. My hand trembles; my pen cannot form the words. I have passed my hand across my forehead. It is moist with perspiration. How stupid it is to have this fear now, and fear of what? To relate in all sincerity Addison Kingsley's criminal act, of which I was the victim.

Enough of hesitation! But I must be as brief as possible. My powers of description are inadequate to describe the suffering I endured.

I once heard of a reporter who pushed the mono-

mania for describing the exact details of horror to such an extent that he risked hanging on the gallows so as to be able to relate to the readers of his newspaper, phase by phase, the sensations he experienced during his dangerous experiment. But there is some suffering, mental and physical, that cannot be described. However, I shall try.

Here is, briefly, what happened to me:

I stood frozen with horror at the millionaire's cynicism. No longer caring for my personal safety, I was ready to spring at him, to fly at his throat, incensed at the horror of such an odious crime, when, at a sign from his master, Bambou seized me in his two brawny arms, paralyzing my movements in the twinkling of an eye, and threw me down on the kitchen floor.

I had not even time to utter a cry for help. Besides, it would have been useless, for who could come to my help in this accursed house, far from all habitation?

With a quick hand Kingsley gagged my mouth, and I felt my lips closed over my teeth under a tight hand which seemed about to break my jaws. My tormentor passed a bundle of cords to the Indian.

"You have not forgotten the trick?" he said.

In a few minutes I was bound from head to foot. All movement was impossible. I soon understood what the millionaire had called "the trick." It was a system of ligatures which, if I tried a movement of the leg, my arms were tightened in an agonizing grip, and if I tried the least movement of the arm, the pain in my legs would wring from me a cry of anguish. My wrists were fastened together. They were able to do whatever they liked to the unresisting mass that I was.

I suppose I must have had an unspeakable look of terror in my eyes, for Kingsley bent over me and said, in an amiable tone of compassionate pity:

"What I want of you is only one minute of courage. What the devil are you so scared about? This is for your own interest what I am going to do."

I could not yet understand the sense of his words.

As Bambou threw me over his shoulder I saw Kingsley take up from the sideboard the two little packages that he had brought from Paris that evening.

"We will do the operation in his own room," he remarked to the Hindoo.

My body broke out in a cold perspiration. I closed my eyes, with the desire and the fear strangely mingled to faint. What were these villains going to do with me?

Bambou placed me on my bed.

"Draw the bed into the middle of the room," said Kingsley, "and go and fetch me a bowl from the kitchen. We must work quickly, and with caution. We won't make him suffer needlessly."

These last words terrified me beyond all expression. I thought that my last hour had come. As I stared up into the millionaire's eyes my look must have been one of horrified fixity, for he said, after wheeling an armchair up to the bed and seating himself complacently:

"Charles, calm yourself. You are not going to drink the ocean. I shall have to put a pair of spectacles over your eyes as a precaution. My hand might tremble."

My terror increased. God help me! What was going to happen to me?

"You want to know what I am going to do, I know. It is very simple. Soon we shall be obliged to separate, Charles. It will not be for long, but you must not lose in one minute all the benefits that have come to you here in my house during the last

month. It is very probable that you will soon see your daughter Evelyne and be obliged to go among people again with an uncovered face, if I may so express it.

"Just because Marcadian failed to recognize you on his first visit is no reason why we must not take every precaution. Evelyne must not know you, neither must anyone else. No one must look into your face with too much insistence, either here or in Boston, where Douglass was known. There are many who knew him, just as there are many who knew Barrabas, so we must be careful. Understand? That is why I first thought of the black varioloid, or some other frightful skin disease. But if nature won't help us, we must help nature. You will see."

The Indian came into the room with the basin he had gone to fetch. Kingsley undid the two packages that he had brought from Paris. The first contained a phial. He emptied the contents in the bowl. The second contained some antiseptic wadding and some ointment.

My look of horror was still fixed upon him. I did not yet understand. I could not understand. I dared not understand!

"You don't yet know what I am going to do.

Do you, yes or no, want your daughter Evelyne to marry my son? Will you or will you not be rich henceforth? Do you want to be worth a score of millions of dollars? Do you prefer to again become Barrabas and sleep to-morrow in a murderer's cell, casting dishonor on your name, on your son and on your daughter? Choose!"

My eyelids did not move.

"But there!" he continuel. "I don't give you the right to choose. I know that I am going to work out a deep plan, and from which nothing on this earth will make me swerve!

"Bambou, give me the bowl and the brush quickly," he said. "Hold his head in a hand-vice by the ears, so that he will not make us do anything foolish. Yes, like that. But be careful. Put your knee on his chest."

I thought I was going mad. With all his weight the servant knelt on my defenseless body, and I saw above me his dark, sinister face and somber eyes. I felt his steel fingers pierce the flesh behind my ears.

With a cautious hand Kingsley lifted the brush to my face.

"It's sulphuric acid," he explained; "that's all. Now let us imagine that you have jilted Lucie Weil

on the eve of her wedding day and she takes her revenge in this way—a way that many women have done before. Would you make so much fuss about it? You would not have the time, it is true, but if she did it it would be far more dangerous. I am going to perform the operation with great care. It is for your own good, I tell you. Don't move! We will only do what is necessary. Your eyes are protected by the spectacles from any mistakes I might make should my hand tremble."

My eyes still remained fixed on his face.

"It is a bad moment," he continued, "but it is only a moment. Now, now, Barrabas, courage. Be a man! Think of Evelyne! Think of the millions that will be your fortune!"

Mad! I was going mad with impotent rage. Addison Kingsley, the millionaire paper king, was going to destroy my face with vitriol!

A slash of fire streaked my forehead! I thought that my brain was going to burst! My eyes seemed to jump out of their sockets!

The brush attacked my cheeks. A rush of foam filled my mouth. It seemed that my tongue swelled instantly to twice its size. Under my palate it seemed to have become as large as my entire body.

It was on my tongue that all the excruciating sensations met together in a horrible mad struggle. I have not the powers of description that the reporter who, for the love of his profession, submitted to the tortures of hanging, had. All that I can say is that at the third stroke of the brush from the hand of my impassible torturer I could bear no more. A wave of fire seemed to rush madly over my face—and then the rest was a blank.

CHAPTER IX

WHAT HAPPENED TO REAL DOUGLASS

THE autumn is the season that I have always preferred. With its advent there comes that sweet, melancholy charm which makes us forget the exaggerated summer days. It is like a lesson which forces us to think of the vanities and uselessness of other ardors of life that were exaggerated, and for many of us were a beautiful brief season, and that was all.

That year October was glorious, with its clear, pale heavens, its lingering sun, and its mild temperature. It was just an autumn of convalescence where one could gather strength to confront the bitter winter. My convalescence was slow and monotonous; it was shrouded with a deep sadness.

I was now in a position to look my horrible situation in the face. I was the victim of an act that was as irrevocable as the act that had been the means of Gabrielle's death. Nothing could now be done. I was disfigured for life. I tried to look

at things on their brightest side, and put all vanity apart; I tried to think that Kingsley had acted as he seemed pleased to affirm, for my own interest.

During my convalescence he was the most attentive, the most eager, the most affectionate of comrades. He would not leave to paid hands the care of changing my bandages. His fingers were as gentle as the touch of a Sister of Mercy. He showed an endless devotion; he revealed to me a heart of gold. And between him and the doctor, whom he had called in more for form's sake, I did not hesitate. It was Addison, my torturer, whose care I wanted.

In his own manner he had explained to the doctor that Lucie had done the deed, and I did not contradict him. He had told him in a few words that I had broken off the marriage on the eve of the wedding day, and that she had taken her revenge in this barbarous manner. And the doctor, who had plenty of sighs at his command, had murmured:

"Ah, the women! It is terrible!"

A week after the deed Kingsley asked my brother-in-law, Marcadian, to call. By that time the high fever which had kept me to my bed had dropped. To Marcadian the millionaire told the

same tale, which made Lucie's disappearance quite natural. And so Kingsley, with his usual great caution, and to make the story more plausible, threw off at a stroke all suspicions which would have sprung up in the minds of those interested in the fate of the poor girl. The assassin was sheltered from all suspicion, and I, by my silence, was constrained to serve him as an accomplice.

When Marcadian was told that Lucie had taken her revenge in such a frightful manner, he broke out into the strongest imprecations against her. He urged me to lodge a complaint against her, and offered, as a friend, to put his services at my command. With my heavy head swathed in bandages, I made a sign in the negative, while Kingsley broke in:

"That was my first thought, but I could not make my friend consent. He, with his nobility of soul, which I fully appreciate, rates above his own personal vengeance the joint interest of my son and your charming niece. If he were to take legal measures, it might have the effect of placing my son in an unfavorable light in Evelyne's eyes. She knows of his former engagement, and it would cause annoyance to them both. What good would it do in the end? The French juries are, as you

well know, my dear advocate, very lenient toward women's emotional crimes. And after all is said and done, it could not alter my dear friend's disfigurement. I personally am for vengeance, vengeance in the extreme, but of course I must submit to Charles' will. We are well rid of that creature, and we are sure of never seeing her again. She has escaped; let her go."

He then told the lawyer not to tell his son about my sickness until I should have quite recovered. As Marcadian rose to go, he clasped my hands in his warmly, and said a few sympathizing words to me.

When I was again on my feet it was always Kingsley who saw that I had everything for my comfort. It was he who led me first to the window to look out on the garden bathed in the autumn sun. The park looked infinitely sad and dreary to me. The trees were stripped of their verdant foliage; the flowers were drooping and withered. All the beautiful life of the garden had gone. I saw Bambou, who had helped in my torture, sweeping the pathways, which were covered with dead leaves. He looked up at my window and called out a cheerful good morning to me.

During my convalescence I had seen him several

times, but I had never seen Jim, who I was sure knew about Lucie's murder. Once I asked Bambou where the man had gone and he replied with his everlasting:

"Flute! flute! Shuffled off like a juggler's ball! Gone like Mademoiselle."

I did not again mention that terrible night to Addison. Nor did I try to invite confidences which might terrify me. And he, on his side, kept silent. Alas! I had determined to submit to all for Evelyne's future happiness.

It was the doctor who took off my last bandage and Kingsley who handed me the mirror, which showed me the terribly repulsive face that I should have henceforth. I have now become accustomed to my repugnant ugliness, but at the moment that I took the oval mirror in my trembling hand I shook from head to foot.

Was this my face: this head of a chimpanzee? My face, this face that had nothing human in it; which was eaten by a kind of skin disease—a horrible purple-red scar. This skin-like parchment paper, all crinkled, which looked as though it had been discolored by some crimson fluid—was it my skin? This mask, with dilated eyes, startling in their excessive mobility, was my mask! the mask

with which I could go freely into the world again without being known!

Weakly I handed back the mirror to my executioner. Then, strange to say, by a powerful contradiction, between the regret of having lost my real face and the assurance that I should never be discovered, I could not resist giving him a look of gratitude, which he understood perfectly, for it made him beam with pleasure. That day he settled the doctor's fees, and when the latter had left the room, he went to the window and closed it. He rang for Bambou, who brought up some hot drinks and a box of Havanas. He picked out one carefully for me. He poured me out a cup of tea and put sugar in it. He was careful to arrange my armchair so as to avoid a draught between the door and the window. He did all with the gentle care of a mother tending a delicate child. He sat down opposite me, placed his ringed hand flat on the table, and said solemnly:

"Now, my friend, we have no time to lose. In half an hour my son will be here. I am going to place you in his hands for a little time; then your recovery will be complete. He will take you to his hospital."

I jumped out of my chair.

"Go to a mad house! Visit an alienist!" I cried in horror.

"You always exaggerate uselessly," said Addison softly. "He is your future son-in-law; you will be in a friend's house, where you will be better able to carry out your plans and mine. Calm yourself, Barrabas. In two or three months my son will be married to your daughter. Have patience. Douglass, we shall soon be in New York, and you will be entitled to your half of one of America's greatest industries. It comes to you legally. Now, so that you will be able to play the part of my deceased partner correctly and without difficulty when you are with my son, I shall have to tell you the life story of the real Douglass. It is painful for me to do so, my friend, to tell my secret to anyone. I need not say that I have absolute confidence in you. I will keep your secret and you will keep mine for eternity."

He drew forward a decanter of brandy.

"A little as a pick-me-up," he said; "we shall need it."

He poured it freely, lit his cigar, then gazed for a moment at his ring, an enormous diamond of the finest water. Then he began, in terms that were enough to excite my curiosity:

"JUST A LITTLE AS A PICK-ME-UP—WE SHALL NEED IT."

Page 96.

"First of all, I must tell you, William is not my son."

I did not move; I had decided not to show surprise at anything.

He continued:

"When I married Nelly Burlington, who came from New Orleans, it was not for her fortune, which was considerable, but for her beauty, which was celebrated. I was young. My business partner was Charles Douglass of Boston. He was as young as I, but had more sense. You will see how much his sense served him. He said to me one day:

" 'Addison, don't marry Nelly Burlington; it will be a bad thing for you if you do. In the interest of our partnership you ought not to marry her.'

"I knew Douglass was a misogynist, whose every faculty was centered on prodigious success of the trust, which we were beginning to foresee. He had no family, no ties. He was a man of energy, insensible to all else but his dream of colossal success. I replied to him:

" 'I intend to marry Miss Burlington. If that does not please you, I am ready to sign a new contract of partnership. I am ready to recognize that

under whatever conditions might separate us in the future, or stay together as at present, you will always have, at the moment that it pleases you, the right to half the profits of the business which we have built up together.'

"So, strange as the contract was, it was signed. I married Nelly Burlington, and Douglass continued by his energy and clear knowledge of business to multiply the profits of our firm. The trust took the proportions that you know. I was perfectly contented with my partner and happy with my wife.

"When William was born, Douglass stood godfather to the boy."

Kingsley stopped, took a drink, and then continued very seriously:

"Then years later, by chance, I came across some letters—and—well, to cut the matter short, I learned that little William was my partner's son."

Kingsley stopped again, blew a wreath of smoke toward the ceiling, than tranquilly continued:

"I can imagine to what extremities a man of your race and your temperament would resort on discovering such unwelcome news. I know what extravagant acts a Frenchman is always capable

of committing. But I preferred that my wife should not know that I had guessed her secret. At this time Douglass was in San Francisco on business. We were opening some new factories on the Pacific coast. I packed my trunks to join him. The business that he was arranging was so satisfactory that when I arrived my time was so completely taken up with business affairs that I almost forgot the real reason of my visit.

"I put off speaking to him. One day he expressed a wish to go to Niagara Falls before returning home. I am not much of a lover of the grand sights of nature, but I decided to go with him.

"I was awaiting the propitious moment to tell him what I had learned. My decision was formed. I had learned by heart the little speech that I was going to say. It was this:

" 'Douglass, I find that I must divorce my wife, and I shall expect you to marry her. I know now that you have loved her for ten years. It is not fair that through the hypocrisy of the mother I should monopolize your child. I think it will be very unwise that for a question of sentiment we break a partnership which has until now given such satisfactory results.'

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"I ought to tell you that at this time we were running under a capitalization of $100,000,000!

"Unhappily an unfortunate occurrence, an accident, stopped me from speaking on the subject to my partner.

"One day when he had gone on the highest ridge above the whirlpool to admire a sunset he was taken with vertigo and fell into the abyss of the gorge, where his body disappeared forever."

Kingsley placed his two arms flat on the table and looked at me fixedly.

No doubt, behind the glasses of my spectacles he could read the incredulity which gleamed from my piercing look, for he said quickly:

"Yes, yes; I know what you are thinking. My wife thought the same thing. When I returned home she threw off her mask and accused me openly of having killed Douglass."

He shrugged his shoulders.

"What interest should I have in lying to you?" he continued.

"Listen to the end of my story, which is absolutely true, I give you my word. You can understand things were not very pleasant at home after that. I truly regretted Douglass' death. I had to bring up William as though he were my son. I sent

him to Boston; his mother died six months later."

"Ah!" I said, my breath coming in short, excited gasps, "Mrs. Kingsley herself——"

"Oh! her death was almost natural."

"Almost!"

"That is to say, she committed a last foolish act. She poisoned herself with arsenic."

"Ah!—Ah!"

"You don't seem to understand! You say nothing but 'Ah! Ah! Ah!' like an idiot. I told you she poisoned herself. Listen, my poor man, you have the same scared, stupid air that you had the evening when you burst into the kitchen and accused me of killing Lucie Weil! What an odd creature you are!"

He poured out another glass of brandy.

"What about William?" I asked.

"Here the story takes another turn," said he, in a lower voice. "I do not quite understand it myself. Follow me well, my friend, before you judge."

"What do you say?"

"Before you judge. How the devil would you like me to say it? Well, Mrs. Kingsley got into a frenzy and cried out once to me:

"'I hate you with all my strength. You are

Charles Douglass' murderer, and I will bequeath to my son a hatred for the murderer of his father. To this effect I have deposited in a safe of the Security Bank a paper which will be given to William when he comes of age. I have made a confession to him of my life and yours.' "

"I understand," I said, as the millionaire paused.

"No, you don't. You don't understand at all," he said testily, "and neither do I, the one who is most concerned in the matter. I let William continue his studies in Boston and paid no more attention to the boy, who was not mine, although he bore my name. With all the letters I had in my possession, I could, if I had wished, have begun a proceeding and deprived him of the name of Kingsley.

"But, as I told you, I object to useless scandals. I had something better to do; I had to get hold of that paper that had been deposited in the Security Bank."

"And you succeeded in corrupting those who were trusted to preserve the immunity of that paper?" I cried, intensely interested now.

"I certainly succeeded in having the safe opened, but I found no confession—no testament."

"Oh! Oh!"

"I merely found a simple note addressed to William. It ran:

" 'My son—You must be on your guard against Addison Kingsley. When you get possession of this note, go to the secretary of the Security Bank. He will give you something that is intended for you.'

"I smiled at the ingenious warning and took possession of the note. When William attains his majority, I thought, he will find the safe empty. After that business took up all my time. Since my partner's death I bore all the responsibility, and I was not able to think of anything else—of Mrs. Kingsley, of William, of any of my disagreeable matrimonial affairs. Besides, I had got rid of William. I had sent him to France to study medicine, a wish he had always expressed.

"To cut the matter short, when he came of age I called at the bank with my wife's letter sealed in an envelope, as though my son had commissioned me to deliver it. The secretary, who was a friend of mine, made no objection whatever, but handed me a second letter from Mrs. Kingsley, in which she had written, so as to trick me:

" 'I can only repeat what I wrote before—be on your guard against Addison Kingsley.'

"That was all. I was fooled! She had suspected that I might get hold of the paper, and before dying had thrown me on a false track!"

"Probably there was no testament at all," I said as I stirred my tea.

"Wrong!" cried the millionaire, angrily. "There was, and the proof is that since William became of age he does not care a rap for what I say. I tell you, he knows. He despises my fortune and treats me almost like a stranger. I am not blind to his indifference. He hates me and I hate him. If his mother has bidden him to avenge his father, I will have my revenge on him for the outrage that he brought upon me. I will! I swear I will!"

A flame of bitterness and hatred leaped into his eyes as he uttered the last words. He took up the decanter and poured himself out some more brandy. He took hold of the glass with a hand that shook ever so slightly and swallowed the contents at a gulp.

His confession left me sunk in bitter reflections. I understood now why the young doctor had greeted me so affectionately and his words. "Father, father, how happy I am that I have found you."

I had at first thought that I had been discovered.

I thought that he had found out who I really was, and had greeted me as Evelyne's father, soon to be his father also. Now it was explained. Nevertheless, I began to be terrified at the way I had stepped into the dead man's shoes. With a villain like Kingsley—for there seemed to me no reason why the slayer of Lucie Weil should not also be the slayer of Douglass and Mrs. Kingsley—to deal with, whatever would become of me?

A bright thought struck me.

"But," I said, "in admitting that William has received a bequest from his mother bidding him to avenge his own father, then Douglass' resurrection, if we can call it so, after twenty years' absence, during which he was supposed to be dead, will change this feeling of hatred."

"Of course, that is what I counted on," said Kingsley, drily. "I rely strongly on your imagination to uphold the difficult part you are playing, now that you know all that is necessary for you to know. I rely, above all, on the love of Barrabas for his daughter Evelyne to keep ever in the mind of Douglass his own interests and mine."

"Yours!"

"All in good time. That comes later. You must

have as much confidence in me as I have in you. Go, my friend, and be on the alert."

"But if he doubts my identity!"

"Are we in France? Yes or no? Where is the Frenchman who will ever believe that the millionaire paper king would despoil himself of half his fortune for the pleasure of bringing to his son his real father, Charles Douglass, and that son an alienist, who is fool enough to marry the daughter of Barrabas, the sculptor?"

He had risen and was striding up and down the room.

"And your papers—the papers that belonged to the real Douglass that you are having registered at the Town Hall! You are safe, Charles. Leave everything to me. A good thing Lucie Weil is out of the way! She was superfluous. Now, here is a check for $100,000," he added, handing me an envelope. "It is our first convention, isn't it?"

He came and placed his two hands on my shoulders affectionately.

"Now, Douglass, my old friend and partner, it is not after twenty years of separation that we will revive the past. It was like some horrible nightmare. Talk no more about it."

He shook my hands warmly, as if to give me courage.

"We have gained the first move, Barrabas. We have the best of the game to carry off the second. You must not lose your nerve, now that you know the life story of the man you are impersonating."

An automobile came through the park and drew up at the door. The young alienist jumped out. How handsome and distinguished he was! I can see him now as he rushed in and seized my two trembling hands in his.

His face flushed with indignation.

"Why did I not know about this terrible affair before?" he cried. "You might have sent me word, father," he said, turning to Kingsley. "Had it not been for Lawyer Marcadian, I should not have known even now! It is terrible, terrible! Oh! Mr. Douglass, I cannot tell you how sorry I am!"

I can still see the millionaire's face as he stood there with his arms folded, looking at the young doctor. As he listened to William Kingsley's sympathetic words his lips curled with a haughty, bitter smile.

Then he tapped the doctor on the shoulder and said dryly:

"Well, my son, it is a miracle that Mr. Douglass

is alive. Now, a little help is worth a great deal of pity. Just show him how much you sympathize with him by inviting him to your home for a time. He will have every care there and will get better much quicker there than he would here."

"I shall be only too happy to do all I can," cried the doctor, making no effort to hide the great pleasure he felt at taking me away. He did not ask what had become of Lucie, but Kingsley had mentioned that she had escaped.

I was made ready quickly for my journey, and, leaning on Kingsley's strong arm, I went down the steps to the automobile.

"I shall come down often and see how you are getting along, Charles," the millionaire said, as he put me in his car.

"Take your time," I replied.

It was Kingsley who pulled up the collar of my coat and closed the window carefully. As he went off he waved his hand and called out:

"Look after him well, William. Poor old man, he has had a rough time. Give him every care. Good-by."

As soon as we were safely off my future son-in-law seized my two hands in his and said affectionately:

"My father! To think that after all these years we have met!"

His emotion was so communicative that, partly from the weak state I was in and partly from pity for the boy, I felt the tears spring to my eyes. He at once put it down to the joy I felt at finding him.

I looked out of the window to have a last look at the old house, where I had submitted to such outrage, and I blessed it all the same for having been the providential spot where my fate and the fates of those whom I loved had so strangely worked out.

Alas! I could not foresee the surprise that awaited me in the new retreat on the other side of Paris, at Saint-Mande, in Dr. William Kingsley's madhouse!

CHAPTER X

CONCERNING MRS. KINGSLEY'S WILL

"WHAT are you reading there so attentively?" William asked, as he sat opposite me on the other side of the fireplace.

"A poem by Tennyson," I replied.

He got out of his rocking-chair quickly, grasped the tongs and pushed them into the glowing fire, making the sparks, as they flew from the logs, light up the dark corners of the room. A servant came in and placed the tea service on the Boulle table, in readiness for the visitors we were expecting.

"Do the poets interest you?" William asked, after a pause.

"They are the only persons who have any excuse for living," I replied. "Would you like me to read this poem?"

"If you like."

I read several verses in a clear-cut voice. I liked to hear my own voice; it gave me great pleasure. When I had finished the poem I looked at the doctor.

"Fine!" he said. I knew he had not heard a word of what I had read. The purity of my diction and the beauty of the verse was utterly lost. I closed the book with a snap.

I got up from my chair and stood with hands folded behind my back, opposite the portrait of William's mother—a beautiful painting representing a beautiful woman. Kingsley had not lied. It must have been for her marvelous beauty that he had married this exquisite creature!

The doctor turned to me and said, in an affectionate voice:

"Wasn't my mother lovely! You and I are alike; we cannot take our eyes from her portrait."

I turned around sharply.

"When are you going to show me the testament you had from your mother?"

"Oh! it is not a testament in the exact sense of the word."

"I understand. Simply her last wishes. Is that it?"

"That is it. But now they are useless because——"

He stopped abruptly, then said:

"I will fetch the paper."

He left me alone and went up to his room. I went

to the window and leaned my scarred forehead against the window pane. I looked over the bare garden, where only the chrysanthemums, like late regrets, formed in the desolate wilderness a splash of color.

For eight days I had been a guest at the alienist's sanatorium. I was getting better and beginning to take an interest in life again. Kingsley came down to see me every day. He had moved into a hotel on the Champs Elysées, and seemed absorbed in the business that had brought him to Europe. The business apparently should have interested me at the same time. There were times when I was startled by the nerve the millionaire showed in the difficult game we were playing. For instance, one day he said to me:

"Douglass, our two factories in Pennsylvania were burned to the ground last week. It is a clear loss of $3,000,000. Don't you think it would be better if we rebuilt them in the west, where labor is cheaper?"

I acquiesced in all he said, with a well-simulated conviction, and little by little I began to acquire a fair knowledge of the business. When he had given me Douglass' business papers he had also given me a large ledger, which I had studied carefully to en-

able me to learn all that was necessary to support my part successfully. He was expecting shortly to return to New York, and one day he had remarked coolly to me:

"Very soon we shall be in New York."

I had already decided that, once Evelyne and the doctor were married, I would refuse to go with him across the water. The prospect was anything but pleasant to me. I had grown to care very much for William, and as he was going to marry my daughter I would live with them and we should all be very happy together. I knew that I should never be recognized now. So for eight days I had been at peace. I was happy with the doctor in his asylum, where twenty-five patients of both sexes were being treated. I was as happy with him as I had been unhappy with the millionaire in his accursed house in Neuilly. I could breathe, I was living, I was at rest, but, alas! it was not to be for long.

The doctor came back and brought me out of my reverie.

"Look," he said, holding out a folded paper, "here it is."

He undid the paper, then looked at me affectionately and said:

"You recognize the handwriting?"

I nodded, then asked:

"Did you get these documents from the Security Bank?"

He smiled.

"My mother had foreseen all that might happen. She thought the papers might be meddled with, so she placed the real testament with your banker, Harrington, of Boston."

"Ah! you don't say so—with Harrington," I cried.

I read the papers, in which, in an exalted fashion, Mrs. Kingsley had confessed the truth to her son. She had stated what kind of death she had chosen so as to rejoin Douglass in the tomb! She accused her husband of killing the father of her son, and told William to avenge his murder. It was all very theatrical.

I folded up the papers calmly. I had not learned much. Apart from the impassioned and exaggerated expressions of love for this Charles Douglass, over which I, Barrabas, could not feel very much moved, I had heard all the rest from Kingsley. Once or twice I had been almost convinced that he had had no hand in his wife's death, and now the papers confirmed it. I felt a great relief.

The young doctor and I were now placed in a

most peculiar mental attitude. The situation was this:

I had thought that Addison Kingsley had killed his wife and his partner. From the testament I saw that I had made a mistake in the first place, but I was still firmly convinced that the millionaire had caused his late partner's death. The alienist had thought for some time that the man whom he called father had slain Charles Douglass, but now he saw that he had made a great mistake, as to all appearances he had found Douglass living in flesh and blood.

"Well," I said composedly, "the problem which presents itself is very difficult."

"What do you mean?"

"It is evident that you do not like Mr. Kingsley, because he made your mother's life miserable. Nevertheless, you must now understand that as I am alive and well you cannot still feel the bitterness against him that you felt before."

"Naturally, I cannot," replied the doctor. "In fact, I must confess that my hatred has changed to indifference. But what effect can that have on you?"

"Oh! for me, it is better or worse, as you may think. I must tell you the reasons why no one has

heard of me for the last twenty years. You have heard how I met with a terrible accident at Niagara Falls. I fell into the abyss, and I believe no other human being has ever survived such a fall. It was simply a miracle that I escaped.

"Well, my boy, when I escaped from the jaws of death I had two courses before me—to return to New York and take my place again as partner in the firm of Kingsley, Douglass & Co., or to disappear forever—let the world think I was dead.

"I chose the latter, for reasons entirely moral. I had been informed by your mother that my partner knew all, and I repented that I had brought dishonor on a man's home—a man who had been my friend, and now could only be my worst enemy. It was not cowardice that made me disappear. On the contrary, I was making a great sacrifice in dropping out of their lives. I hoped that in time they might be reconciled. You can imagine that I needed a deep sense of abnegation to begin life over again. I began as a mechanic in California. I led a rough life, I had no intention of ever returning to New York, and I should never have done so if I had not casually heard what the general opinion was concerning your mother's death."

I touched the yellow document which lay on the table.

"That testament," I continued, "allows me to make a confession of which I am now ashamed. Last year I decided to return to New York to avenge your mother. I had learned, quite accidentally, that Addison Kingsley was a widower and that the general opinion was that he had poisoned his wife in a very mysterious manner, but the affair could not be brought to light. I did not for an instant doubt the truth of this supposition."

"And you came back"—broke in William breathlessly.

"To avenge your mother, just as you intended, on the strength of this paper, to avenge your father."

"Oh, father! father!" William cried, overcome with emotion. "You are right; it is a difficult situation for us both. We cannot respect Addison Kingsley, yet, on the other hand, I cannot feel the same hatred for him, because, after all, he did not kill you or my mother."

"William," I said, gravely playing my rôle to the end with a pathos which, by strength of continued practice, had become almost sincere, "we ought to have a great pity for him."

"Yes, I think so, too," the doctor said seriously.

"A great pity," I repeated; "a pity built of remorse."

"Remorse!" repeated the doctor, in surprise.

"Yes, we have brought dishonor on his name."

"Stop, father!" said the doctor, in a tense voice.

"We must have the courage to admit the truth, my son," I replied gravely. "I was blinded by the glamor of love for many years, but now, with my maturer years, I know that Addison Kingsley was the real victim."

With bent head, the doctor murmured:

"Yes, I am afraid that is true."

The telephone rang and interrupted us. William rose quickly.

"Hello! You cannot come? Hello! Sorry, father—— Yes, do. Good-by."

"Business affairs keep him," he said, turning to me. "He will not be able to come down. I am pleased. I have no wish to see him. And you, father?"

"William, you must not get into the habit of calling me father. In private you insist upon doing so, but you cannot call us both by that name. It is absurd. It was arranged that you should call me Charles, and you must keep strictly to that. You have always called Mr. Kingsley father, and you

must continue doing so. If not, it will be confusing. Father here, and father there! Voyons!"

"But I wish to do so when we are alone," said the doctor.

"It is impossible," I insisted. "Because, before strangers, your tongue might slip, you know."

He crossed over to the tea service that the servant had arranged in the alcove of the drawing-room and took one of the cups from the tray.

"Who are your other guests?" I asked.

"I have a surprise for you," he replied, smiling.

"A surprise?"

"Marcadian is going to bring his niece with him this afternoon. This is the first time that my fiancee has called here. You are going to see Evelyne at last. I have talked a great deal about her. Now you will see for yourself, if she is not beautiful. I am quite sure you will like her. Oh! by the bye, I have told Marcadian everything. He knows what you are to me. He knows exactly how things stand."

"You were wrong in doing so," I said, annoyed.

So I was going to see Evelyne this afternoon. I almost lost my head. I walked up and down the room, displacing, without motive, the music on the piano, the magazines on the stand. I was going

to see my child. My heart beat so I thought it would burst.

"Here they are!" cried the doctor, who was standing by the window.

Instinctively I walked away and sat down in the most obscure corner of the room.

The door opened and the servant announced:

"Mademoiselle Barrabas, Monsieur Marcadian."

My eyes turned to the doorway. Evelyne stood there, looking like an apparition in her somber mourning garments. Behind her stood Marcadian with his sharp eyes and polished manners.

CHAPTER XI

THE VISIT

I DO not wish the reader to form a hasty opinion of me. I do not wish to appear more impassive than I am. I do not pretend to pass for a strong character. I have shown some meritorious courage in the ordeals that Fate pressed on me since the sad death of my poor wife Gabrielle. I owe it solely to an excess of feeling, although that may sound somewhat contradictory.

Not one hour of the day passed but what I thought of the tragic death of my poor wife, of my unfortunate son and of what had become of him. As time went on and the chances of discovering him seemed more remote, I realized more and more that my plan for saving him had been reasonable and human. I recognized now the profound wisdom of that silent command which I had read on the sealed lips of the victim, in the close fold of her enigmatical mouth, and I was pleased that I had obeyed it by instinct more than by reasoning. That shows me once more that our in-

stinct is superior to our intelligence. I have always thought that our manhood's pride comes from our instinct and our snobbish vanity from our intelligence.

I felt dazed at meeting my daughter Evelyne again.

In the long folds of her black dress, her erect carriage had an air of nobleness and pride that I had not seen before. Draped in a long veil of black crape, her fair face seemed transformed with a new dignity, which changed her from a girl to a woman. I saw at a glance how much grief had ripened her young soul. A brusque metamorphosis had taken place—her childish mischievousness, her girlish charm, and even her little languid ways had gone. But in the way she looked at the doctor as she held out her small gloved hand to him I knew that grief was not the only power that had changed her soul. Love and sorrow combined had brought about this new womanly charm.

She spoke a few gracious words to me, then turned her head away quickly to hide her horror for my repulsive face, which was enough to inspire anyone with repugnance.

Marcadian came to me quickly, holding out both hands, and said, warmly:

"Ah! my dear Mr. Douglass, how are you now? Better and happier I hope. The doctor has taken me into his confidence and told me all! I beg that you will let me devote myself to your interests—let me be a real friend. Life deals out her sorrows to all; existence is but a succession of griefs!"

"You say that, maitre? Look over there, then," I said, smiling, as my eye followed William and Evelyne, who were sitting in the bay window, whispering lovers' "little nothings." The doctor had taken Evelyne's two hands in his and was talking to her in a low voice.

"That is true," said Marcadian, following my gaze, "and that is my work. I brought that about."

"I congratulate you."

"Tenez," he said, "there are times when I believe that trouble is sent for our good. You know all that has happened in Evelyne's life lately?"

"Yes," I replied. "It was terrible. I have my own personal opinion of that tragedy."

"Your own personal opinion," said Marcadian, wonderingly, looking hard at me.

Just then the servant came in with the tea. The doctor and Evelyne came forward. My daughter looked at me with pity, but with less horror.

I spoke a few words in English with the doctor,

which brought forth a remark from Marcadian.

"You speak English with the same accent as my unfortunate brother-in-law, Mr. Douglass, although I think that your diction is much purer than his."

"Yes," said Evelyne, sadly, "Mr. Douglass' voice strangely recalls my father's. Ah! monsieur," she said, turning to me, "your voice goes straight to my heart. Speak again, I beg of you; it is my father's voice."

The doctor seemed annoyed at the turn the conversation had taken, and called his fiancee away to the other end of the room on some pretext. They sat down on the sofa side by side, and he tried to get her interested in some stereoscopic views. Foolish youth! As though he could, with his pictures from different parts of the world, distract her from the interior world that was in her mind!

Marcadian had placed his tea cup on the mantelpiece and now drew near me.

"You told me that you had your own opinion?" he said, curiously.

"That resulted, perhaps," I explained, "by the similarity between my position of twenty years ago, when I had my accident at Niagara Falls, and the situation of your brother-in-law. Somehow I

cannot prevail upon myself to believe that M. Barrabas is dead. In fact, I am sure he cannot be."

"And upon what do you base your convictions, may I ask?"

"On the hesitation that is shown in summing it up as a crime or an accident."

"I don't quite follow you, but I assure you there is no reason for any indecision in the matter."

"My belief is, M. Marcadian, that the son Polydore committed the crime and that M. Barrabas thought if he disappeared and left the letter in which he avers that he killed his wife by accident he would spare his son from paying the penalty of his crime and save the family from the dishonor that would fall upon them."

The lawyer looked grave.

"That may be so, but I feel that we shall never hear of the father or the son again. The persistent failures of the police in their endeavors to find them incline one to believe that neither one nor the other, as they affirm in writing, could survive the awful accident; so, as a matter of fact, we are obliged to consider their death as the only solution. Besides, we have almost sure proofs of Polydore's death."

"Ah!"

"Yes, three days ago his clothing was found on

the banks of the Marne, near Noisiel, which is about eight or nine kilometers from Bry. Does not this indicate that the unhappy youth has put an end to himself?"

"It seems so," I faltered, trying to hide my emotion. "And do you think that such a discovery——"

"Will settle the matter very quickly. I am doing all I can to end it now."

"If the son is drowned at that part of the Marne, they ought to be able to find his body," I argued.

"You think so? More than a month ago! It is not far from the Marne to the Seine, where the current can carry it God knows where!"

"And you think that the sculptor has committed suicide also?" I persisted.

"It is feared so, for it must be remembered that my brother-in-law had luncheon on the day of the accident in an inn at Ligny, two kilometers from the spot where they found the clothes. Father and son being together at that spot must have some significance."

"Hum!" I uttered doubtfully, with perfect coolness. "In any case, it is merely a supposition."

"As likely as any that can be put forth, Mr. Douglass."

"I beg your pardon. I have no wish to grieve you needlessly, Maitre Marcadian," I said. "I only wish to believe you. But somehow I cannot bring myself to believe that Barrabas is dead. Let us speak of something else. By the bye, is the date of the marriage fixed?"

"Oh, no! The tragedy in our family will prevent the wedding from taking place just yet," said the lawyer, hastily.

"I do not think that under the circumstances you should let the question of propriety arise," I said. "I should be very sorry to return to New York before William's marriage."

"And I, Mr. Douglass," said the great advocate, earnestly, "do not wish to hide from you that my most fervent wish is to bring about the marriage as soon as possible. With an impetuous man like Mr. Kingsley, one is always at the mercy of a sudden change of mind. And then we may have something to fear from that woman, Mademoiselle Weil. I should like to get my niece's marriage over as soon as possible. But we must allow a certain time for family mourning."

We had been talking so earnestly that we had not noticed that the doctor and Evelyne had left the room. They returned at this moment, Evelyne

holding in her hand some long branches of chrysanthemums that William had cut for her.

"I am going to take them to my mother's grave," she said, sadly.

I turned my head away to hide my emotion. I must not be caught showing my feelings.

"Dites-donc, William," I said, abruptly, "I want to profit by Lawyer Marcadian's visit to talk over a little business. I don't know if Mr. Kingsley is going to give you a marriage dot, or, if so, what sum it might be. My position is somewhat delicate, but, nevertheless, I should like to offer you a little souvenir. You cannot refuse me this——"

"Oh! don't speak of money. Evelyne and I will have all we need."

"I said a little souvenir," I insisted.

With an easy, careless air, which seemed to surprise him, I handed the lawyer the check, in due form, for 500,000 francs that Kingsley had given me.

"It is odd," remarked Evelyne, who no longer seemed to feel a repulsion for my horrible face, "how your voice is like my poor father's."

But my cool manner of giving 500,000 francs overcame all suspicion of my real identity. For the last half hour that we had been together neither

Marcadian nor Evelyne had been troubled for one moment. So no one in the world would know me now. The proof was conclusive!

"Would you like to see over the asylum?" the doctor asked, turning to Marcadian. "Do you care to see some of my patients?"

"I would like very much," replied Marcadian. "It must be rather interesting."

"Very interesting, but I should think very sad," said Evelyne.

"Are you coming, Charles?"

"I know some of the patients already, and, I assure you, it is more sad than curious. If you'll excuse me, I will stay here and have a whisky and cigar."

As the doctor led his guests away I could not help thinking. What was the use of visiting a lunatic asylum? It was only the presentation of the tableau that we have daily under our eyes—in the streets, at home, abroad, in all walks of life!

I began my cigar. I do not know what at that moment had made me feel so happy. My conversation with Marcadian had made me feel inclined to think that all would turn out as I had foreseen. All the sacrifices that I had made would not have been entirely lost. The affair would be settled by

the plausible suicide of Polydore. As to myself, I defied all earthly powers to discover me, and as to Evelyne, she was going quickly toward happiness, like a young girl who has not the right to turn back and look at the dark past, whose bright eyes are turned brilliant with hope toward the future.

Then I blessed Addison Kingsley—my tyrant, my torturer! I blessed him as one blesses Providence. For some time my thoughts floated vaguely through my mind. I had arrived at that state of reverie where all tangible thought is absent, where all sentiments are confused in a sort of mental somnolence, when a servant came hurriedly into the room, crying, in a frightened tone:

"La demoiselle! Mademoiselle! She was taken ill in the asylum! They have carried her into the doctor's room!"

In less time than it takes to write it, I was in the doctor's room. I found Marcadian with blanched face and terrified eyes, watching the doctor as he bent over Evelyne, who lay stretched out on a sofa with closed eyes, her lips pinched and her face deathly pale.

I stood in the doorway, gazing from the doctor to Marcadian, whose eyes were haggard and troubled by a fear that I could not understand.

"What is the matter?" I asked, as I looked at my child.

"She was frightened at Z——, one of the patients," said the doctor.

"Afraid of Z——?" I repeated, wonderingly.

"Yes! Yes! It was on account of Z——," said Marcadian, stupidly, with shaking voice, which told its own tale of fright. He stood in the middle of the room, trembling and looking as though he had seen a ghost.

"Who is Z——?" I naturally asked.

For reply Marcadian held up his two arms in speechless abandon, then let them fall limply by his side.

"Pass me the little phial which is on the cabinet, on the left," said the doctor, quickly.

Evelyne opened her eyes. With a frightened look she fixed them first on William, then her uncle, then on me. But her look traveled farther; she seemed to be looking for a fourth person as she gazed with terrified eyes toward the door. Then she gave a nervous shudder and burst into tears.

"That's right. She will be better now," said the doctor.

Little by little, Marcadian came back to his senses.

"I will go and see about the carriage. We must go home at once," he said.

He went out staggering like a drunken man.

"If I had known, I would never have suggested visiting the patients," said the doctor, regretfully. He forced a smile to jest with Evelyne.

"I ought to have known that a young girl's nerves are more sensitive than ours. What a nervous little thing you are!"

The doctor was called away just at that moment, and I was alone with Evelyne. The carriage drove up to the door. I offered her my arm.

She was trembling so that she could scarcely stand.

Deliberately I took her up in my arms. She clasped her two arms round my neck in confidence, and I could feel her heart beat against my chest. I could have carried the world at this moment. As I placed her down gently among the cushions she held up her face to mine.

"Thank you, Mr. Douglass," she said.

I bent my repulsive face over my child's delicate beauty and pressed my lips to her forehead. I could not trust myself. I turned abruptly and hurried back to the house.

CHAPTER XII

Z——

THE doctor seemed annoyed at the scene which had so unhappily terminated his fiancee's visit. He reproached himself bitterly.

"What a fool I was to take her into the cells! I never for one moment thought it would affect her like that."

What puzzled me most was my brother-in-law's condition. He seemed just as frightened as Evelyne. It showed a weakness of character in a man whom I thought insensible to every kind of emotion. It seemed a direct contradiction to his usual *sang froid.* I could not understand it! What sort of a mad creature had they seen! I did not like to betray my anxiety on Evelyne's account too much, so I was forced to hold my curiosity in check.

"The more I see of Marcadian," said the doctor, "the more convinced I am that he is a nervous man

of a most peculiar type, and I am beginning to think that the tragedy in the family has left some indelible traces in him. Without a doubt this is a case of *phychose symptomatique;* that is to say, a mental state more or less abnormal. This weak sensitiveness is excusable in a young girl, but in a man it is abnormal!"

"That's it," I said, smiling, "you are going to prove to me that there are fools everywhere."

"Charles, you do not understand the value of words. I am not speaking of fools. Now my patient Z—— is not mad any more than Marcadian is mad; any more than you or I."

"Who is Z——? I should like to know this creature, the sight of whom could throw Evelyne and her uncle into a state of physical collapse. With Evelyne it takes an attack of nerves; with the lawyer an incomprehensible stupor."

"There is nothing very much the matter with Z——. You do not know what the study of psychiatry is. You ignore that outside these walls, going about freely in the world, there is a mass of people with strongly marked mental defects. Now, do you imagine that Addison Kingsley has all his mental faculties?"

"No, William, I do not!"

"I assure you the morbid phenomena are visible in him. You have never seen him in one of his terrible furies, or you would know what onirisme is."

"You amuse me with your science," I said, shrugging my shoulders.

"Well, even you, Charles—pardon me for saying so—you are decidedly an *euphorique;* your artificial and excessive optimism is a veritable exaltation. Your manner of being always satisfied with whatever comes along is remarkable!"

"So I am an *euphorique!* an *euphorique!* That's pretty good. And what is Kingsley—what would you call him?"

"A *mythomane*—a being who by strength of lying no longer knows that he lies, and transforms the truth so diabolically that it loses all sense."

"Mon cher," I said, seriously, "I do not possess two cents' worth of knowledge, but I quite believe that you are carried away by your zeal for Lombroso theories and are making a great error."

Naturally, I thought to myself, it is Kingsley who is an *euphorique* and I am a *mythomane.*

The conversation had led to a point where I thought I might profit by it. I wanted to know

about this mad creature who had so frightened my child. After a short silence, I said:

"And Z——, what about this lunatic, whom I have not yet seen?"

"Oh! that man has given me a lot of trouble for some time. Sometimes I think he feigns madness, but at other times I am sure it is not so. He is a most extraordinary subject. He is a remarkable case, a doubly intermittent form, of which the foundation is epileptic hysteria. Very curious case, indeed. It is a certain form of madness which comes through love."

This simple word to which the alienist's tirade led up made me burst out laughing.

"Would you like to see him?" the doctor asked.

"Sapristi! I am not Marcadian or Evelyne, and I see no reason why I should not see him."

"Oh! he is all right; it is not a repugnant case; it is merely a case of melancholia. Come along, then; he is in cell 13, on the second gallery."

I followed the insanity expert, my curiosity now thoroughly aroused.

"Why do you call him Z——?" I asked, as we walked along the wide passage.

"Well, I shall have to tell you how I came by him; it is quite a story. I have never mentioned it

to anyone yet. I really have no right to keep him in my asylum; I should get into trouble if it were known."

I did not ask him to explain what he meant. He did not seem to care to pursue the conversation.

He walked across the gardens to the little spare building where the men were kept. On the way we passed one of the keepers of the establishment. He came up to the doctor hurriedly.

"Monsieur le Docteur," he said. "No. 13, Z——, has had a terrible attack."

"An attack!"

"Something fearful, Monsieur le Docteur. It came on after your guests had left. We thought at first of putting him into a strait-jacket. He bit me! Look at my wrist. We gave him two injections of morphine!"

"Is he calm now?"

"Oh! quite calm; he is crying quietly."

"How very strange!" murmured the doctor, more and more puzzled.

We had reached cell No. 13.

"Wait a minute," said the doctor; "one never knows. I do not wish you to run any danger."

I stood a few feet from the cell, while the doctor went in. I heard him speak in a harsh, commanding voice, very different from his usual tone.

"Now, then, what do all these tantrums mean. I'd like to know? And after I had promised you that in a few days you should go out in the grounds! You have bitten the attendant! I am ashamed of you! I have been far too good to you lately. If it happens again I shall turn you out at once!"

I heard no reply save a vague wailing, which evidently accompanied a mute appeal, for the doctor continued:

"Yes! yes! kiss my hands and beg me to keep you. I shall not always be so lenient with you. Now the very next time——"

Only a deep moan came to my ears; then the doctor came to the door and called me.

"Come in, Mr. Douglass, and see the most disobedient, the most ungrateful boarder that I have."

I took two steps into the cell. I threw a quick look around the small room, which was barely furnished. On a low couch a man sat, his legs swinging, his arms crossed, looking stupidly before him.

His hair and unkempt boyish beard indicated a long absence from the barber's.

He raised his eyes to mine and looked hard at me. I did not lower my piercing gaze. I did not flinch, as I recognized my only son, Polydore, the murderer!

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAN IN CELL 13

WHEN the clock struck the hour for dinner, I went down to the dining-room and found the doctor already there. He seemed preoccupied. He stood with his hands on the back of his chair, his brows knitted in thought, his eyes fixed on the table, which sparkled with silver and crystal under the white light of the little electric lamps. He had donned his evening clothes, and wore a large white camelia in his buttonhole.

"I shall have to hurry through my dinner," he said hastily, "I am going to a soiree."

It was naturally my intention to make the most of the time the doctor would be there, so as to find out in some way how my son came to be in his lunatic asylum. By a great effort I was able to control my emotions. As the hors d'oeuvres were placed on the table, I remarked carelessly:

"So you consider the patient I have just seen an extraordinary case."

"Yes, quite exceptional."

"He is not a paying guest, I presume."

"Oh, no! and now I am very sorry I have taken him in."

"On account of some trouble you might have if it were known, did you not say? What would happen?"

"You ask what might happen. I do not know who he is, and according to the law I ought to have sent him on to the Saint Anne Asylum."

"But how did he happen to come to you? I am rather interested in him. Pour me out a little Baune, mon ami."

"Well, I got to know him under circumstances that puzzled me from the first, and which puzzle me to-day even more. I have good reason to remember the night when this man came knocking at my door. It was on the very day that I lost Lucie Weil, the same day that I placed the case with Lawyer Marcadian."

I thought for a moment. My wife had been killed on the 6th of September. I had first met the millionaire in my brother-in-law's office on the same day. It was the day after, on the 7th, that the doctor placed the case with Marcadian. So it was the day after the crime that Polydore had sought

out the alienist. But why had he come to Dr. Kingsley, and why had the doctor, contrary to the law, taken him in? That was what I could not understand. I asked him how it was, and he gave an explanation that was quite simple and plausible enough.

"That very evening I returned from the lawyer's in a state of mind that you can easily imagine," said the doctor. "I was feeling terribly upset about Lucie's disappearance. When I arrived home, I was informed that a young man was waiting to see me in the reception room. I went in and the youth began to speak in a very incoherent manner.

"'I know, Monsieur,' he began, 'that you are Doctor Kingsley, the alienist, but I do not know who I am. Neither do I know if I am mad, but I am certain that I shall go mad if you do not save me. Save me, doctor! It is all about a woman. I do not know the name of the woman. Ah! yes, she is called—I am an idiot to try to think of her name, for I do not know it. I love her to distraction. You will look after me; she will pay—later. There is one thing I want to tell you, doctor; it would be more loyal. I came here with the intention of killing you. It is an affair that we shall have to settle later.'

"I looked at the young man quickly. He was dressed in new clothes, which did not fit him. His white hands were not in keeping with the workman's suit that he wore. There were certain hesitations in his manner which could not deceive an expert. I thought at once he was a simulator. My first thought was to send him to the police, and for them to send him to the depot. But it was late. I felt a great pity for the depressed being, who was evidenly suffering from some terrible mental shock, and I decided to give him a bed for the night, with the firm resolve to send him away early the next morning. I had him searched by one of the attendants. There was no clew found whatever that could enlighten us as to his identity, even approximately. His suit and his underlinen were quite new, and without the name of the tradesman who had sold them to him; and that again confirmed my suspicion that he was feigning."

"And the next day?" I asked indifferently, as I played with the stem of my wine glass.

"The next day I kept him," said the doctor.

"Why?"

"Oh! I am still looking for the reason. I had made a diagnosis of his case. I considered it as a case of undeniable erotic folly. But that which

puzzled me most was the amnesia, which seemed to me feigned and real in turns. And what interested me most of all was that, having forgotten his own personality and those of his friends, he was marvelously well informed about me and about my private life, my sentiments and my ways of living."

I looked at the doctor in wonder. I thought he must be joking.

"Another reason that I can give for the folly that I showed in keeping this individual," he continued, as he helped himself calmly to a *salmis de canard,* "was the similarity of my case and his."

"The similarity?"

"Voyons, mon cher. Wasn't I at that time smitten with this erotic madness? And that passion I had for Lucie Weil indirectly caused you the loss of your face."

"Tell me," I said, as I poured out the champagne, "tell me about this threat to kill you; has he attempted to do anything violent?"

"No, but at the same time I know that he hates me with all his strength."

"Is it possible!"

"Yes, I am sure of it, although he is very grate-

ful for what I have done for him. This strange creature's gratitude is without limit."

"How can you conciliate these two sentiments?"

"It is the curious phase of the case. There you have the intermittent and double form. This strange creature has a dual character in the most marked degree I have ever seen! But I have had enough of him; he causes me a great deal of annoyance. As I have no more interesting observations to make, I shall go to-morrow to Ville-Evrard and see one of my colleagues. He is a friend of mine, and I am sure he will help me get out of this affair. I should be sorry if he frightened anyone else like he did Evelyne, so I shall get rid of him."

He rose from the table and rearranged his white tie before the mirror, then throwing a last satisfied look at his reflection he prepared to go.

I finished the contents of my liqueur glass, and then said with an indifferent air:

"Mon cher, I want you to do me a favor."

"Why, anything I can do, you know I shall be only too happy," he said, smiling. "What is it?"

"Well, I just want to ask you not to carry out your project. Why not keep that poor idiot here; it would be doing a real charity? I think Evelyne

was in a nervous state this afternoon; otherwise she would not have been so frightened, because he is not at all repulsive."

"You don't understand; I might get into a lot of trouble from the administration," he said, "and I assure you it would be very serious for me."

"Yes, I know, but cannot we arrange it in some way?"

"You seem very much interested in him."

"It is because I feel so sorry for him. It seems a strangely pitiful case to me, and I shall be genuinely sorry if you carry out your plan. Poor lad, he seems so to want to stay here."

"Oh, then," said the doctor, laughing, "if you take it in that way, I shall have to give in. If you want to amuse yourself by making observations in psychiatry, I'll turn him over to you. Henceforth he is your property; but be careful all the same. I do not think he is dangerous, nevertheless I guarantee nothing. Between ourselves, that youth is deep; he is the unknown."

He went off smiling. I was left alone in the dining-room. Alone to think. So Polydore had not paid the penalty as Marcadian had believed. Why had he written the letter saying that he in-

tended doing so? Without trying to fathom the hidden reasons of his subterfuge, I recalled his own words: "Would my suicide be sufficient punishment for the crime I have committed?"

In this voluntary seclusion had he not chosen to inflict a more terrible punishment? Or had he sought out this lunatic asylum as a safe hiding place from the police—refuge without danger.

I did not think, like the doctor, that it was an intermittent form of madness. To me Polydore was a prodigious simulator. He could deceive a man of science, who had the reputation of never making a mistake, but he could not deceive me. Seeing that his cunning was as deep as my own, we should now be able to work in unison so that no one would be able to unravel the mystery.

Ah, Polydore! if your poor mother from the depths of her tomb could see the success of our double ruse, I think she would be happy; her enigmatical mouth would smile, because we have so marvelously accomplished her secret will, which was beyond death to pardon you and save you from the guillotine. If there is a divinity in this world, we must call her Chance; it is Chance who has reunited us within these four walls. To save you I will defy all! What does it matter if Marcadian

did recognize you in your cell, and if the sight of you struck your sister down with terror? It is not from them that we need fear being caught!

The doctor had given me a plausible reason why he had sheltered my son in his asylum, but the reason which had drawn the wretched boy to this spot still remained a mystery to me.

I resolved at once to return to cell No. 13, and profit by the doctor's absence to have a talk with Polydore. He had not recognized me in the afternoon.

Any explanation that I could give to my son as regards the transformation of my whole physical being would be beyond his comprehension, and I knew on the other hand, that the motives that he would give me for his interment in this asylum would equally surpass mine.

I had that strange presentiment that above our two phantoms of wills a superior will, which was my wife's, was directing the course of these extraordinary events.

I rang for one of the keepers and asked him to take me to cell No. 13. The man hesitated.

"When the doctor is absent," he replied. "I ought to mention that you run a great risk in visiting the patients, sir."

"There is no danger for me or for the patient," I answered.

"Bien, Monsieur," he said, and led me across the courtyard.

"Shall I stay to watch Z——?" the man asked anxiously, as we neared the door.

"It is needless; I am going to have a few minutes' conversation with him."

The keeper turned on the electric button; the room was flooded with light. Z—— raised himself on his elbows, blinking his eyes. He recognized me as the visitor who had been to see him before dinner.

"So," he sneered, "it is you Douglass! What do you want here?"

At his insolent tone the keeper was on the alert at once.

"You can go," I said to him.

He hesitated for a moment, then backed out of the room, closing the door after him.

As a means of precaution I shut the second door, which was thickly padded. I did not want our conversation to be overheard.

Z—— sat shaking his head from one side to the other, like a bear in his den who finds himself the plaything of an onlooker.

"Well, what do you expect to get here, Douglass?" he sneered.

I looked hard at him, and said in a slow, penetrating voice:

"I have come to talk to you, Polydore, my son."

"HE REMAINED WITH VACANT EYES FIXED ON MY LOATHSOME FACE."

Page 151.

CHAPTER XIV

GIVE ME FIVE LOUIS

I HAVE seen faces strangely altered by a sudden shock, but never in my life had I seen a face so overcome as that which Polydore turned to me on hearing the words which fell from my mouth.

He turned livid. Then for a moment his whole body shook as though he had the ague. His look was not one of horror or wildness. He had *no look*. His body stopped quivering and he sat on his couch looking like a dead person sitting on his tomb. The shock at hearing the voice which came from my lips, which he recognized as his father's voice, was so violent that he seemed to turn to stone.

He remained with vacant eyes fixed on my horrible, loathsome face, ravaged by acid. Instinctively I covered it with my hand.

"It is true, Polydore; I am your father."

"My father!" he whispered at last, in a far-

away, frightened voice. "My father in this terrible state? What does it mean? Speak, father, tell me, why are you here in this madhouse? And your face, oh, how horrible!"

"Calm yourself, my son," I said, quietly. "I am your father. I was once Barrabas, the sculptor, but now and henceforth I am Charles Douglass, an American citizen. I cannot go into details; you would not understand. I want you to tell me all that has happened since that day, three times cursed, when we last saw each other. I ask you, why are you in Dr. Kingsley's asylum? Speak, tell me."

Polydore passed his trembling hand across his damp forehead.

"Ah!" he breathed, in the voice of a somnambulist, "I see what you want; you want me to confess everything. Uncle Marcadian and Evelyne came here this afternoon. How did you learn I was here?"

He looked at me for a moment, with drawn, haggard eyes and then said:

"Parbleu, I can guess! It is through Lucie that you know all. *La Miserable.* Where is she?"

"Lucie! What Lucie?"

"Lucie Weil!" he cried.

Almost anything Polydore could have said I could have listened to without moving an eyelid, but to hear him utter the name of Lucie Weil, the girl who had come so strangely into my life, who had been so cowardly assassinated by my benefactor, froze me with terror!

What had Lucie Weil to do with my son's being confined in a madhouse? For a moment my brain whirled. What secret ties bound one to the other? What were the links which were forming a chain to tighten us all together in the most mysterious manner?

Weakly I also passed my hand across my forehead, and drew it away damp with perspiration. A shudder ran through me from head to foot. I forced my voice to be steady as I asked:

"Who is Lucie Weil?"

"Ah! you do not know Lucie? Eh bien, I will tell you all! It was on account of Lucie that I killed mother!"

"You are mad, Polydore," I cried in horror.

"Yes, that is what that imbecile of a doctor says. No! I am not mad, but I was on the day when——"

And shaken with sobs, he hid his face in his hands and cried like a child.

"Speak, my son," I said, encouragingly, "speak,

you know you have nothing to fear from me, I am trying to shield you. Your mother wished it; you were her boy."

He lifted his head and looked at me sadly, the tears streaming down his face.

"You could not understand. You do not know what it is to love like I loved Lucie Weil. Only in novels do we read what it is, but I know what it means. For six months I tried to win Lucie's love. Ah! if you only knew her; she is beautiful!"

As he uttered these words his face was transformed, his eyes lit up with a joy that he could not hide; he paused a moment, and then continued:

"I loved her since last spring, and pleaded with her in vain. In the Quarter it was known that William Kingsley was going to marry her. They said that he was blinded by his passion, and everyone pitied him. I alone envied him."

He was seized with a violent fit of coughing; when the attack had passed, he continued:

"I ought to have had the courage to tell you and mother that I wanted to marry her, but I knew in advance what your reply would be: 'A little milliner, without a dowry, and no education! What can you be thinking about, Polydore! It is a caprice that will soon pass.'

"I ought to have shown as much independence as William Kingsley, because I loved her as much as he did. Then when I knew that another man was going to marry her, I saw red! A comrade told me that Kingsley had given her a magnificent bracelet for her fête. I could only offer her a little ring that would cost five louis! I loved her to distraction. She is honest. I swear it, father! and oh! she is beautiful—Lucie! Lucie!"

This time I could not control myself. I threw my son's thin hand away from me, as I cried out in a frenzy:

"Ingrate! was it for such a caprice that you murdered your mother? From what mire, from what slimy clay is a man's soul made, when it can be possessed by such a vile passion?"

"I think," replied my son, calmly, "that at such a moment there are two men in us, and that one is not responsible for the other."

His quiet answer calmed my indignation. I looked at him in sorrow and felt a great pity stir me.

"Tell me what happened afterward," I said.

"Oh! it was simple enough. By the step you took, my poor father, you left me the choice between an easy suicide and a hazardous disappear-

ance. If I had only listened to the first man that is in me, it is certain that I should have followed the first course, but I was too much of a coward not to listen to the counsels of the other man—the crazy lover of Lucie Weil. I wrote the letter that you know of to the police, so as to baffle them. Your daring act had cleared my brain, and had given me an extraordinary lucidity of mind.

"I spent the five louis that you gave me to buy this workman's suit, instead of the little ring I had dreamed about, which was useless now. I left my clothes on the banks of the Marne. I thought that they would believe that through grief I had drowned myself. Then I racked my brain to think where I could hide, so that the gendarmes would not find me. Then my love for Lucie gave me an inspiration. I wandered about all night in the woods; and the day after, I came to this asylum, belonging to the man whom Lucie loved. It was a risky thing to do; I could not foresee that my ruse would be crowned with such a complete success. I simulated madness. Dr. Kingsley might have sent me to the administration, and then I should have been discovered and sent to the guillotine, but I do not think that anxiety for my personal safety counted much in taking this risk; I seemed

to be obeying an instinctive force—an impulsion that pushed me to the threshold of my rival's house."

Polydore stopped talking and seemed plunged in thought. I was silent. I was crushed and overwrought by what he had told me.

When he came out of his reverie, he murmured in a far-away voice:

"Tell me, father, has the doctor married Lucie? Ah! she is so beautiful—ma belle, ma belle!"

"My son," I replied, "I am broken-hearted to see that even now, after the terrible lesson that you have received, you still have a single sentiment which dominates all others. You still love Lucie Weil?"

"I shall always love her," he replied.

"And if you were offered your liberty and you had Lucie, you would go through all risks and perils for her?"

"I should not hesitate. I would go through any peril and risk for her. I would commit any crime for her."

"Polydore," I said gravely, "I have made a great sacrifice to save you, unworthy though you are. But I did not do this for you; it was your mother's wish; it is your mother's face that has always

guided me, and I should reproach myself all my life if I had failed in saving you from the consequences of your crime. You are right. There are two men, face to face, in the brute that you are, and one is not responsible for the other. But it is my duty to put an end to any illusion you may have concerning that girl. I know Lucie Weil."

"Ah! I knew it," he cried, with shining eyes.

"I knew her; it was she who threw the vitriol at me! She has expiated her horrible crime; she is dead!"

"Dead!" shrieked Polydore, springing from his couch.

He turned on me, quivering with rage, and hissed the insulting word in my face:

"Wretch!"

With a vigorous grip I seized him and threw him back on his couch. His mouth was contorted and his lips covered with foam.

"Stop!" I cried. "It is more than pity that melts in my heart at this moment. There are no words to express the grief, the hopelessness in which you have plunged me. On account of that girl you became a matricide. Ah! you call that love! That is the human beast!"

And in spite of my horror—in spite of my male-

dictions, I kept my arm around my son, as though to shield him. I did not cease to overwhelm him with both curses and caresses; because, if I cursed the brute who had struck his own mother, I felt within me the eternal tenderness, or the eternal weakness, which chained me to my own son, this pledge of my love for Gabrielle, my wife. I held him with all my strength; I threw him back on the couch with all my might, and flung at his face, in a maddening contradiction, all my loathing, and all my paternal love!

His voice rattled in his throat; his eyes stared stupidly.

"Dead! She is dead! Lucie! Lucie!"

Then suddenly he became dull, under the weight of a paralyzing stupor; the tears rolled down his livid cheeks and through his set teeth he muttered:

"She is dead! Mother is dead! Lucie is dead!"

At that moment it was not clear to me if his remorse surpassed his love, or in what measure of affliction the poor, dazed boy mingled in his delirium his mother's name and the name of Lucie Weil.

It would have been easy for me to put the climax

to his craziness and tell him things that would make his brain whirl—to cry out, for example, the simple truth—to have said:

"Polydore, I am no longer Barrabas; I am Charles Douglass, an American citizen, the business partner of the millionaire paper king; and a month ago I was to have married Lucie Weil at the registry office at Neuilly. You may be at rest, Polydore, your rival, William Kingsley, will not marry Lucie, for the alienist who sheltered you and saved you from the guillotine is going to marry your sister, Evelyne, and I have just handed over to your uncle, Marcadian, a wedding present for them of half a million dollars."

If I had uttered these words to Polydore—words which in appearance were so extravagant, but which were, however, only the exact expression of a simple truth—they would have crazed him beyond all measure. But there was no reason why I should explain all this to Polydore; I did not wish to terrify him. I had other things to talk about.

He was now quite calm. I let his arm fall and sat down near the couch. His face had resumed its natural expression; his eyes were clear and questioning.

"Tell me what I ought to do and I will obey you."

"My son," I replied, "you have prescribed your punishment yourself. Your words were prophetic; the day that you struck your poor mother, when you said: 'Will suicide be a sufficient punishment?' Assuredly, no! That would have been too lenient for your dastardly crime; it was not chance that sent you into this lunatic asylum, and it will not be chance that will get you out of it."

"What do you mean, father?"

"That you will never go out of this cell, where you are buried alive. Polydore, I swear it on the faith of Barrabas!"

He looked at me with a smile which seemed like a hideous grimace.

"And if the doctor insists upon my going?"

"I'll settle that," I replied.

"And if I tell the whole truth to the doctor, if I confess all and tell him that I am Evelyne's brother, what then?"

"I'll settle that, too," I said.

I drew a small revolver out of my pocket and held the cold steel barrel under his nose as he jeered at me. He shrugged his shoulders in contempt.

"You are giving yourself a lot of trouble for nothing," he said. "Lucie is dead, is she not? Eh bien, it is as though I were dead. What does anything in the world matter now? If you call this the punishment—to be forever closed up in this madhouse— Bah!"

And he turned over on his couch, with his face to the wall, his forehead in his hands, and began to cry quietly.

I got up and left the cell, my shoulders bent under the crushing weight of his useless remorse and the fear of the inexplicable future, which in spite of my boasting assurances, in my heart I was not more sure of than he.

CHAPTER XV

AT THE SALON

WE were at the Autumn Salon. We had just walked through the room where Boldini had exhibited the paper king's portrait. Addison Kingsley held me by the arm familiarly. As he pointed to the canvas, he said to me ingenuously:

"That is the only picture that interests me here. Let us sit down, Charles."

The great painter had obtained, with his habitual skill, the exact expression of the millionaire paper king—the immense power, the determination, every earmark of an incredible will.

"By the way, Charles, I spoke to the painter about you."

"To Boldini! Why?"

"For your portrait. And what do you think he said?"

"How should I know?"

"'But, Monsieur, how can you expect me to paint a portrait of a man without a face!'"

Rearranging his monocle, he dropped the subject of portraits, ignored the pictures and the crowd of visitors who passed and repassed us. Turning to me he tapped me lightly on the knee.

"Look here, Charles," he said, "instead of making mysteries about trifles, which incidentally I should have thought you would be above, tell me frankly what passed yesterday at William's."

"Marcadian and Evelyne came to tea. You were expected, and we were disappointed that you did not come."

"Yes, but instead of telling me what I already know, and saying it like a parrot who recites a lesson, tell me something I do not know. What is the matter with William to-day? he has something on his mind. And you, why are you so downcast? You have a great deal to be thankful for, so tell me what it is all about."

"I do not mind telling you, that seeing my daughter has quite unnerved me. The sight of my child has made me feel more than ever the horror of my present position. It was difficult for me to show my usual composure, and it required considerable effort not to betray myself. That is all."

"No, that is not all! I am sure there is something else. This morning I went to see the great

lawyer, Marcadian, whom I consider nothing more nor less than a great fool—man of no strength of character whatever, and he is still more upset than either you or William. You have not told me all; your daughter, Evelyne, is ill in bed to-day from the effects of some great shock she received yesterday. What happened?"

"What do you say? Evelyne is ill from a shock —my daughter!"

"Be calm, Charles. There is nothing much the matter with her. Now tell me quietly what faith I may place in Marcadian's words. He told me only this morning, with some vague regrets that seemed to me very feeble and inconsistent, that some unforeseen obstacle had arisen, and that William and Evelyne would not be able to get married. He seemed to wish the affair to end at once. Explain to me frankly, what is the obstacle?"

"There is no obstacle," I said firmly; "none whatever."

"I am sharp enough to see by your vehement protest that you are laying your heads together to surmount the obstacle."

He gave one of his loud laughs, and struck the bench where we were seated with his fist.

"Well, I, who am not obliged to be cautious or

cunning, and who have as much frankness as you have hypocrisy—I am going to say this, Charles Douglass, that I, Addison Kingsley, the recognized father of William Kingsley, wish this marriage to take place. My son is to marry your daughter, do you understand?"

"I am not deaf! It will take place, you can be sure of it, if I have anything to say. I am not master of the situation for nothing."

The millionaire chuckled.

"You reverse the roles, my friend. It is an inoffensive vanity and I'll let it pass, at least for the short time that you can use it. I am not obliged to tell you my plans; nevertheless, I am going to tell you Charles, it is very possible that we shall not be here for our children's marriage; our business affairs claim us in New York."

"I am not going to New York with you," I said firmly.

"I say that you shall return with me to New York, and what I say goes," he replied resolutely. "I pay, and I expect to be obeyed. Understand?"

I got up from the bench upon which we were seated, and, standing opposite him, I looked him squarely in the face, as though I were a match for him.

"You can do just what you like," I said, "but I tell you now, once and for all, that I am not going with you across the Atlantic. I consented to enter into your schemes; I am playing the disgraceful role of father to your wife's son, but let me tell you, Kingsley, there is a natural role of which you cannot rob me, which I cannot throw off, and that is the role of Evelyne's father. Denounce me if you like, destroy the edifice that your own hands have constructed, if you wish, but for me to leave my child to a fate that I feel is full of snares, never! Anything, anything you like, rather than follow you!"

I expected him to burst into a storm of angry words, but either because of the crowded room, or because he did not take much account of the force and the sincerity of my protestation, he looked at me contemptuously, and then said hissingly:

"Fool that you are! You are as big a fool as Marcadian! Must I repeat to you until my last breath that all I do and can do is for your own interest?"

He got up from his seat, and we walked out of the building in silence. In the Avenue des Champs Elysees, he turned to me and said:

"Where are you going?"

"To the Rue Michel Ange. After what you told me, I must go and see Evelyne. She is sick!"

"I should hope that you are not going to risk all, through a weak, foolish sentiment!"

"Kingsley," I said sternly, "if you could know what I am feeling—if you could imagine the new horror of my position, since I have seen my child, you would do me more justice!"

I hailed a taxi and jumped in, leaving him gaping on the pavement.

"So," I thought, "you think yourself very clever, Mr. Kingsley, with your ingenious manner of molding to your fancy, like a wax sunfish, all that has occurred in the last two months. Well, let me tell you that at your school I have made great progress, and now I am capable of acting for myself, and I'll show you so."

The millionaire's injunction to follow him to America, his light sarcasms, his boasting laugh, had no effect upon me whatever. It all went in one ear and out the other.

Now I was master of the situation! I had great influence over the doctor; I now held my unfortunate son's fate in my hands; and was not this

the sole aim for which I had been striving since Gabrielle's death? It had all been so marvelously brought about that it far surpassed my wildest hopes. No! a thousand times no! Nothing in the world would make me follow Addison Kingsley to America. His threats of denouncing me were in vain. Could I not in return menace him with my knowledge of Lucie Weil's death and the disappearance of his Hindoo servant? Now I could be a match for the paper king! At least, I believed I was strong enough to regard his presumptuous coercion as a dead letter.

For the moment all I had to think of was Marcadian and Evelyne, because it was from their side only that I had any danger to fear. A weakness, a blunder on their part, would reveal all.

When I arrived at the Rue Michel Ange, I must admit that my anxiety was great.

Joseph, the valet who had taken flight so precipitately on my visit the day after the tragedy, received me with all the obsequious manner that he thought was due to a person of such importance as Mr. Douglass, business partner of Millionaire Kingsley.

As I went into the familiar office, with absolute confidence in my incognito, I felt a secret pleasure,

which was very akin to a boasting swagger.

Marcadian joined me almost immediately, and I saw by his effusive manner, and the look of satisfaction that he wore how agreeable my visit was to him.

"Ah! good day, Douglass," he cried, with both hands outstretched. "I was going to write to you for an appointment."

I decided to take the bull by the horns, and replied:

"What's this Mr. Kingsley has just told me, that you wish to break off the coming marriage between your niece and William?"

"You cannot understand? If you will wait, Evelyne will be down. She has been very feverish since yesterday, but is a little better now, and she will speak to you."

"Sick on account of her little fright yesterday? That was rather childish, was it not?" I said, forcing a laugh.

"No, it was not childish," said Marcadian, heaving a deep sigh. "I can only repeat there is something you cannot understand. I cannot say more than that."

I turned around in my chair and played carelessly with a paper knife, which I used to empha-

size my phrases, with little sharp strokes on the edge of the table.

"Marcadian, I think that you are absurd," I said. "I don't know what you are making this fuss about, but I tell you that it is my greatest wish that William, who is to be my heir, marries your niece."

As I uttered these words Evelyne came into the room and I got out of my chair to meet her. The poor child, with pale face and eyes red with crying, came forward. My hideous face no longer inspired her with horror, as it had at first. She came up to me and greeted me affectionately. I tapped her pale cheek, and said, smiling:

"You are all nerves, little one. So you want to make us all unhappy?"

She raised her tearful eyes to me:

"Something has happened, Mr. Douglass," she said sadly, "but I cannot tell about it. You would not understand. I can only tell you that I cannot marry Dr. Kingsley."

"Now, Evelyne," I said, as I drew her into a seat beside me, "this is just because William let you see his crazy patients. That wretched Z—— is the most distressing, but it will never happen again, I give you my word."

"Has the doctor decided to send him away?" interrupted Marcadian, anxiously. "He told me he should after what occurred yesterday."

"That would be inhuman," I said.

"Yes, it would be cruel, most cruel," Evelyne said, looking at me with sweet, anxious eyes. "I should not like to feel that I was the involuntary cause of that patient's misfortune. That is why I am going to ask you a favor."

"Well, it is granted in advance," I said, smiling.

"I do not wish the doctor to send that poor fellow away. I want you to use your influence, and protect him," she said.

"I will do so. Now, Marcadian, give me some plausible reasons why you wish to break off this marriage."

Both Marcadian and Evelyne looked confused.

"It is impossible to tell you," he said. "You would not understand."

"That which I do most certainly understand is, that for some foolish reason, of no importance, you are trying to separate two young people who love each other. William loves Evelyne, and Evelyne loves William. What else is there to say, I should like to know. That is all that is necessary."

"No, that is not all," insisted Marcadian. "I was

to blame in bringing about this marriage. I was so pleased to think that Evelyne's future was settled that I put aside all thought of the terrible tragedy that made her an orphan. I think it better that Evelyne should not marry."

"Then," I said, quickly, "then there is something else, and you are not frank with me."

Marcadian looked at me with his old piercing look; his sharp ferret eyes met mine. He was again the cool-headed lawyer, who feared that I, a stranger, had begun to lift the veil of their family secret.

"Yes, there is something else," he said, coldly, "but if I were frank with you I should betray others. Believe me, Mr. Douglass, that I am loath to renounce such an excellent marriage for my niece, and she, poor girl, is broken-hearted at this last blow which fate has dealt her. But it is impossible, understand me, quite impossible, for Dr. Kingsley to marry my niece."

I got up and began to walk up and down the room.

"It has something to do with Z——," I said, after a silence. "It can only be something about that idiot Z——!"

The lawyer and his niece turned pale, and did not reply.

"Oh!" I said carelessly, as I walked up and down with my hands behind my back. "I don't care about your family secrets, I have no wish whatever to pry into them. I am giving 500,000 francs as a wedding present to William and Evelyne. Then after my death, William will have $10,000,000, and he will inherit the same amount from Mr. Kingsley. I do not understand how you can let your scruples stand in the way of such an excellent match. I shall love Evelyne as though she were my own daughter; she is just the girl whom I should like to see William's wife. I don't care a rap about your secrets, I feel sure there is something about Z——, and if it is about that poor creature, I do not wish you to tell me. Because of a mere scruple, I do not think you should mar the future of this young couple. Evelyne is letting herself be influenced by fancies, and you, Marcadian—all I can say is, that you are absolutely ridiculous. Z——, Z——, you amuse me with your Z——! If you desire it, I will send Z—— away from the asylum, or, if you prefer, we will keep him forever; I give you my word, forever. I'll do more; I'll give you another proof of my friendship and of my influence over William."

Marcadian looked at me wonderingly.

"You know that he has kept this poor idiot contrary to all regulations, and that he might get into trouble about it if it were known. He told me this only yesterday. Well, I, Charles Douglass, swear to take this poor idiot in my charge. It is I who will place him under the care of the alienist, Dr. William Kingsley. It is I who will have him confined to the asylum, if you wish it so. I hold myself responsible for this youth. I will avert all questioning from the government. And from this asylum Z—— shall never go without my consent, and my consent will depend entirely upon your wish. Can I say more! Can I do anything more?"

It would be impossible to paint the astonishment and the joy which lit up Marcadian's face and shone from Evelyne's sparkling eyes.

Marcadian grabbed my right hand, and Evelyne pressed my left. They both spoke at once, their words expressive of deep emotion.

"Ah, Monsieur, you cannot imagine the great service that you have done for us. God bless you! You have lifted a load from our minds. Then you swear Z—— shall never leave the asylum!"

"Never, unless it is your wish."

CHAPTER XVI

THE MILLIONAIRE MAKES AN UNEXPECTED MOVE

AND so, after these most disturbing events, I began to acquire a little calm—a semblance of tranquillity. From this time on in the doctor's home it would perhaps be possible to pass some happy days. Thanks to the millionaire, and in spite of him, I should have the power to deceive all—to rest after my past torments, and to enjoy my triumphs. Was I not now, as I told the paper king, "the master of the situation"?

Every day I went to see Polydore in his cell. From him I did not fear any opposition to my will. He was passive.

As to the doctor, he had lent himself with good grace to what he called my whim. He merely thought that I was eccentric, and joked me about my odd protege. Needless to say, the gratitude of Marcadian and Evelyne was extreme. They overwhelmed me with kindness.

I ignored the millionaire; I no longer reckoned

him in the game. Had I been more cautious I should have looked for the real reason which made him not only agree to his recognized son's marriage, but to desire it as much as anyone. Ah, if I had only known how deep his scheme was!

I was happy to think that he knew nothing of Polydore. Polydore was safe in the asylum, that at least was hidden from him.

And so I began to form some fairer hopes for the future. When the doctor and Evelyne were married, I would be near them, and my life would flow on contentedly, with the prestige of my false identity and the certitude of my incognito. I even arranged the future to suit my liking, with a presumption which makes me now smile with self pity. I had dismissed the past too easily. I had reckoned without my host. I was calmly enjoying a calm which, alas! was not to be for long.

Kingsley came every day to Saint Mande, and Marcadian called once a week. Things went along smoothly.

One frosty morning when the weather was clear and bright, we had just finished our chocolate and William asked me to go for a drive with him. He had ordered a frisky cob, and an English dog-cart from the livery stables in the Rue de Paris. He in-

tended driving to Bry-sur-Marne to see the little villa where the sculptor Barrabas had lived. Marcadian had given him the keys.

As may be imagined, I was not indifferent to such an invitation. The thought of seeing my little cottage again filled me with a strange emotion.

"You know," said the doctor, "that the affair is as far from solution as ever. The police despair of ever clearing the mystery. It is believed to have been a terrible accident, of which the ensuing results were no less terrible—the suicide of the victim's husband and son."

He touched the horse with the end of the whip, and we trotted off smartly in the direction of Nogent.

"Poor little Evelyne," he said, in a pitying tone, "she is the real victim of that tragedy. I am glad to think that my love for her is not merely a selfish love, as man's love usually is. This seems a sort of duty and love combined."

"Such sentiments do you credit, William," I replied, as I drew off my fur gloves to refill my pipe. The sharp frost pricked my fingers like needles, and I seized the occasion to talk of the weather, so as to change the subject. I could not tell why, but I felt a vague unrest at William's words.

I wanted to think. I wanted that silence which, coming upon us, makes the smallest echo perceptible in the depth of a tortured soul.

We crossed Le Perreux and reached the Bry bridge.

It seemed to me at this instant that I had a dual personality, and that I was going to visit an old friend whom the village people called "The King of the Fools."

In turning the avenue on the left, I recognized old Tape a l'Oeil, the retired army officer. He was returning from his morning constitutional, and when we stopped before my little house, with its closed shutters, looking sad and neglected under the withered creepers, I could hear behind the hedge Mother Carre calling her chickens, as she threw handfuls of grain about her yard.

I felt how empty my heart was now. The weak tears rose in my eyes, and for a moment I thought I should betray myself.

My daughter's fiance, by an irony of fate, showed me the way to my own house.

"Down this passage, the sculptor had his studio off the end wing."

I followed him meekly, like a stranger, who finds himself in an unfamiliar place. I looked as indif-

ferently as I could into the different rooms, where I had lived all my life, where I had spent years of calm happiness with my wife, Gabrielle, and our two children.

"Look," said the doctor, "this is the studio; here is the statue of 'Life' that the artist was working on. His wife posed for it. Evelyne and her uncle had given orders that nothing should be touched in this room. Of course, we shall never live in this cottage; neither will anyone else, as long as we live."

I was unable to speak. I stood before the glistening white statue, my eyes riveted on the dear face, which spoke to me across the stretch of time; it seemed to thank me with its enigmatical mouth.

I was moved beyond all expression, and the doctor probably noticed it, in spite of all the efforts that I made to conceal my feelings. But he evidently put my emotion down to my artistic admiration for the statuary.

"I see you admire it. I think it is a beautiful piece of work. He was very talented."

"I like the statue," I said quietly, as I sat down. "You say that your fiancee and her uncle are going to leave the place always just as it was."

"It is their wish, and, naturally, I shall not oppose their wishes."

"You are right, William; it is a touching attention to the dead to keep this spot intact."

I filled my eyes with the sight of my loved studio, which had been the scene of the happiest hours of my life. I gave a last look at the statue of "Life," as it stood white and glistening on its pedestal. Under the spell of this mute marble, the spot seemed henceforth sacred. The soul of the house, my dead wife, Gabrielle, had carried the secret of happiness away with her.

I could not put aside the memories that all these surroundings evoked—the wide divan, where I had rested when I was tired from my work, the portieres which hung from the stained glass windows, the paintings in oil and water color, gifts from friends; beautiful drawings, the rare books on the shelves of my bookcase. All the books I loved were in this room—here were the fragments of myself!

All my treasures were arranged just as I had left them, and a vague feeling came to me that this touching attention of my daughter would one day have its reward. An inward voice whispered to me, that one day I should come back, that I should end my days in the quietude of my little cottage.

When we returned to the dog cart Mother Carre, who was talking to old Tape a l'Oeil, looked at us curiously:

I heard her whisper to the old soldier:

"Isn't that a lucky thing for Mademoiselle Evelyne; who would believe that she would make such a good match as that, after what happened!"

I heard old Tape a l'Oeil say:

"What a dreadful face the old man has!"

And we returned slowly to Saint Mande in time for luncheon.

It was on the afternoon of the same day that Addison Kingsley, from whom one might be prepared for anything, changed with one of his great moves all my future plans.

Little did I imagine what terrible consequences would result from this new move of his. At first I rose up against his wishes, and then after a little reflection, the most elementary logic forced me to rally, and like a beginner in a game, I, poor fool, imagined that I held the trump cards!

It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when the millionaire arrived at Saint Mande. He was in an unusually gay mood, and I saw at once that something unforeseen was coming.

The doctor was absent, and Kingsley began at

once to tell me his plans. What a fool I had been to arrange the future to my own liking! But it was the millionaire, always the millionaire, who directed the course of events.

"My friend," he said, as soon as we were alone in the library, "at 4:30 on Friday the Touraine sails from Havre—at 4:30. Today is Saturday. You have five days to get your things ready and to say good-by. Now get busy right away, you have no time to lose."

I refused quietly, but firmly, to go to America with him.

"You seem to have forgotten what I told you the other day at the Salon," I said.

He burst into one of his exasperating laughs.

"Will you be good enough to listen to what I have to say, instead of chattering like a magpie? You surely do not think that I am going to give you millions of dollars for the pleasure of seeing you twirl your thumbs for the rest of your days, idling your time here with my imbecile son and your charming daughter. I am not going to tell you all my plans. I will explain my intentions when we arrive on the other side of the pond. For the present you have only one thing to do, that is to obey, understand, to obey! Listen to me, Charles, it is not

moral; I mean it, moral (that is a word that I consider extremely French) that a bachelor like you should not wish someone to benefit by his fortune. You have no heirs, Douglass."

"Evelyne," I stammered.

"Yes, yes! Evelyne and William. You speak like a booby. It is not Barrabas to whom I am speaking just for the moment, it is Douglass, my business partner. Now I tell you, it is only moral that Douglass should have an heir. And the quickest way to get one is to take the shortest cut."

"The shortest cut!"

"Perfectly! Now, for instance, you have among your friends or acquaintances, a young man—damn it! can't you listen to what I am saying? Do you think I am talking for pleasure? This is business! As I was saying, do you happen to know a young man? I want a young fellow for my future plans who will be worthy of my kindness and for whom you might make an enviable career by adopting him and giving him your name. Can you think of anyone just at this moment, Douglass?"

I was amazed at such a proposition! What could be the motive? I turned slowly around in my chair and looked with something akin to dismay at my

benefactor. This last whim of his seemed to surpass all others.

As my reply did not come, he said irritably:

"You don't know anyone? That is annoying. One could find a man easy enough in New York, but I should have preferred a Frenchman out of consideration for you and for the other."

"The other?" I said wonderingly.

"You get on my nerves with your questions; they have neither head nor tail. Briefly you have five days before you to hunt up the man. Notice that I leave you at liberty to choose. You can choose a scamp if you like. It does not matter to me who it is. Take him from a prison, if you like; take him from William's menagerie, or any other place as bad. It is all the same to me, for the purpose I want him for."

All my nerves seemed to click at his last words. I got up from my seat and stood opposite to him and repeated in a dazed fashion:

"From a prison! From this asylum! You want me to adopt a young man, to make a stranger my son, and give him the name of Douglass! I am to make him my heir and take him to America?"

"That's it exactly! Now, Friday evening, on board the Touraine, without fail. Sails from Havre

at 4:30 exact! The transatlantics don't wait for passengers like your French omnibuses. Charles, don't look at me like that! You seem dazed! If you could only see what a fool you look! You look as though you were asleep, with your eyes open!"

"There will be some formalities to arrange," I said, in a voice that I did not recognize as my own, "and I should like to stay here for Evelyne's wedding."

"Evelyne can get married without your help. And as to the formalities with your absurd French law, we will get on without them. Have the young man on board! We will arrange the rest in the United States. We do things better and more quickly over there.

"And now you have been instructed, Charles, and a man instructed is worth two not instructed. Good-by, old friend, old partner! Happy man! Au revoir!"

This extraordinary Yankee had been gone a quarter of an hour, and I was still crouching over the cheerful fire in the library, turning over in my mind the most extravagant hypotheses, but forced to recognize once more that this man represented Providence, and that it was impossible for me to push away the hand that he held out to me.

And only a few days before I had said to him: "I am master of the situation now! I am capable now of showing you that I can act alone."

And how I had boasted that I would not follow him to America! I had said that I would do anything, anything, rather than that! I was nothing but an automaton in this man's mysterious hand, and every move that I thought I myself could make, was directed by him; and always, so it seemed, and as he had told me, in my own interests.

Polydore! Polydore! my unfortunate son, I shall be able to save you now. It was not worth while suspending over your miserable head the terrible perspective of a life-long imprisonment in a madhouse. It was hardly worth while swearing to Evelyne and Marcadian: "He will never leave the asylum."

I laughed nervously as I mocked myself.

Ah! the previsions, the useless calculations that we make in our life, always succumb to chance, the only deity which manifests itself by incessant miracles.

And dizzy with a new-born hope, I made my way across to the asylum, where I found Polydore in his cell, tossing about in a restless sleep, his fists clenched, and muttering incoherently.

CHAPTER XVII

BON VOYAGE

THE millionaire seemed highly amused at the strange choice that I had made. He appeared to think it odd, ridiculous, but decided to make the best of it.

"Charles, haven't I always said that you were an eccentric creature? Who would have thought of adopting a lunatic! Are you quite sure that he is not dangerous? You may not think much of your skin, but I think a great deal of mine. Take care!"

I entered into the spirit of his gaiety, and said reassuringly:

"Don't be afraid, Addison; if you do not wish to be proud of your son's knowledge, you can at least have faith in my perspicacity. This youth is not mad. One confers on mental alienation the most incomprehensible names. We have not changed much since antiquity! With the Greeks, madness was sent upon them by a revengeful goddess. This youth is smitten with erotic madness and that is all."

"Ah! Ah! That's fine! A lover! That is just what I want!"

"He is merely smitten with amnesia, and he has lost his personality. He seems to remember nothing of his past life."

"And you, kind and generous man, at my expense, are going to give him a personality. That's good! Fine!"

He laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks. I could not see the joke.

The doctor considered me an eccentric individual, there was no doubt about that. But his anxiety was not that I was taking Z——; it was because I was going. He could not be consoled for my departure. He searched in vain to discover what had caused me to change my plans. He tried hard to dissuade me from going; his grief was very sincere.

"What I cannot understand," he said, "is why you have changed your mind so suddenly. Why can't you put off your return to America until after Evelyne and I are married? Your being at our wedding would have seemed like a promise of future happiness. Why now must you put your business interests first? For the last 20 years it has gone on without you. Yes, yes! I know you are anxious to get in the swing of things again over there; but

what difference does a few months more or less make? As soon as I have found my real father, I have to lose him again. I think Charles, that for the love you bore my mother, you ought to stay here until after I am married."

It was annoying to have the doctor always referring to this embarrassing subject. However, I caught the ball in the air and returned it.

"William," I said, gravely, "it is on account of the memory I have of your dear mother that I have taken this abrupt decision."

"What do you mean?"

"My dear boy, let me reason with you for five minutes, and then you will understand. Mr. Kingsley and I have made a compact to forget the past, and I should not be doing right to open a wound that has taken so long to heal. It would not be loyal on my part to stay here; Addison is returning to New York and I must go with him. You can quite understand how much my presence at your wedding would hurt him; it would rekindle the hatred that has smouldered during 20 years for the man your mother loved. Don't you think that in the eyes of the world it would be a defiance to his wounded honor? The world is not charitable, and it will not hesitate to say that Charles Douglass still

fools his partner. It would be an insult to the memory of your mother. In the eyes of the world, you should be the respected son of Addison Kingsley, if only for your mother's memory. I think he has shown a noble spirit in forgetting the past, in guarding the secret of your birth; and we have not the right to openly resuscitate the past, and to divulge that secret."

The doctor seemed very depressed, for my reasoning had touched him, without entirely convincing him.

He tried another argument.

"Listen," he said, "I am worried about you. Kingsley is capable of anything!"

"You say that, my boy, after having recognized the mistake your mother made in accusing him of my death. Shame! I should have thought better of you, William!"

"I don't know why I said that," he stammered. "I said it without reason. I have a strong presentiment that your going away together and renewing your partnership will result in some calamity on the other side—something terrible! Something horrible is going to happen. I feel it!"

He put his hand before his eyes as though to blot out some frightful picture that he saw.

"The idea of taking Z——with you," he continued in a low voice. "I do not understand it at all. What does it mean? Is it true that you are going to adopt him, and give him a career. It all seems so unnatural—so altogether strange!"

"It is not strange. It is quite simple. Kingsley has given me several proofs of good faith. I owe him at least one."

"What do you mean?"

"He has promised to forget the past; in acknowledgment I ought to signify by an act that will touch him that I pledge myself equally to forget, as much as possible. If I concentrated all my attention on you, it would, as I remarked a little while ago, open the old wound again. Now, if I, Douglass, a bachelor, adopt a youth without family ties in the eyes of the world, it would greatly mitigate the fault of the past. I give you my word that this act has touched him more than I can express to you; he was moved to tears! I have shown good policy in taking this step. I would not insult you by thinking that you would be hurt by not inheriting all my money at my death. You will always be the first in my affections. This step that I have taken in order to hide my real sentiments for you will deceive everyone, Addison Kingsley included."

"Very well," said the doctor resignedly, "but why Z——; why not some one else?"

"Why some one else more than Z——? I have been cut off from everyone for so long that I seem to know no one in the world. Here is an unfortunate youth whom I have met here. I have made him my protégé; his mind is weak, but he is not mad. You told me yourself that he is not dangerous. Besides, I am ridding you of an incumbrance, which, sooner or later, might bring trouble upon you."

"That is true," he replied; "you are quite right, but I had made certain plans for the future, and now they have all fallen through. I had hoped that you would stay always with Evelyne and me; in some respects she and I are placed in the same position—she has no father; I have one, but I have not the moral right to show my affection openly for him. You could have been a father to both of us; our home would be your home. Evelyne and I would have done all we could to make you happy. But you prefer to go, and I must submit."

William's emotion was communicative. If he had continued much longer in that tune, I should have broken down completely. I was sick of the

lies and scheming! How much I wanted to throw aside my hypocrisy and tell him all, and be Barrabas, the sculptor, again!

Fortunately, at this weak moment, he was called away on a hurried visit to a patient and I had time to recover myself.

A great contrast to the doctor's sorrow was the delight of Evelyne and Marcadian. Evelyne did not try to hide the contentment she felt that I was taking Z—— away with me. Z—— was going across the sea! I was taking him with me, and I was going to protect him! Oh, how she and Marcadian wished me good luck and bon voyage! The lawyer scarcely left my side during the few days that remained. He accompanied me to the different stores; he told me the best houses to get what I required; he made them show me the most up-to-date trunks; he examined the grain of the leather of the traveling bags, and advised me on all my purchases. If I had not stopped him, he would have settled the bills. He became enthusiastic at every moment.

"Ah, Mr. Douglass," he cried, "how happy you must be to go back to America. It has been the dream of my life to visit that wonderful free country, where all is great, a country free from our con-

ventions and our prejudices! Ah, you are fortunate!"

His laudatory speech was without a shade of malice, but it became so exaggerated that it was ridiculous.

"It can't be very enjoyable to you, this Paris life," he continued.

"On the contrary, I find the Parisian life most agreeable."

"Yes, I understand, but just a little tame. Always the same thing. Nothing exciting, nothing unexpected!"

It was with difficulty that I refrained from laughing in his face. Tame! Nothing unexpected! Mon Dieu! I should be difficult to please if I thought so!

He spoke as little as possible about Z——, but it was obvious that it gave him pleasure when I broached the subject. Then his enthusiasm knew no bounds. I was a man of heart—a man of generous impulse! My act, so simple in itself, became noble when he spoke of it. He compared me to great men who had given up all for a humane cause! He was too ridiculous.

"Ah!" he cried excitedly, "what a great service you are doing for humanity! A poor boy, slightly

demented, is condemned to an asylum, because he has no friends, no one to take care of him. If Doctor Kingsley did send him out into the world again he would fall into a worse place. He would be sent to Saint Anne or Ville Evrard. The youth will bless you all his life, Mr. Douglass."

During the last five days that remained, I went three evenings to dine in the Rue Michel Ange. Evelyne and her uncle showed me every attention possible, which I secretly enjoyed. The night before my departure Evelyne played me my favorite airs from Grieg. She was a talented musician, and played with rare feeling. When the last note had died away she closed the piano softly and came and sat down on a low chair beside me.

"You cannot understand how much I am interested in Z——," she said, "although at first he caused me so much fright. I love you so much for what you have done, Mr. Douglass, but I would like you better still—a hundred times more—if you will promise me that when you are over in New York you will always look after him. I would like to tell you more, but I cannot."

I patted her cheek and replied smilingly:

"What a contrary little girl you are! Eight days ago you made me promise to use my influence to

keep this poor idiot in the asylum all his life, and now you are perfectly satisfied that I am going to take him away with me. But I promise you that I will always keep an eye on Z——. I do not think he is entirely without intelligence, so I will do all I can for him."

"It is very fortunate for him and he ought to be pleased that he is going away," she said.

"He does not seem very pleased," I answered; "he does not seem to appreciate the situation."

"Oh, I am quite sure he does, Mr. Douglass. He does, indeed!" she said imprudently.

Her spontaneous words caused Marcadian some uneasiness. He quickly changed the subject.

If they thought Z—— was pleased about going, they were mistaken. He was totally indifferent. When I told him that I was taking him out of Europe, he did not show the slightest surprise. He did not seem to understand that henceforth he would be safe from the police, and that under the name of Douglass he would begin life afresh. He listened absently to all I had to say, and when I had finished explaining to him how much he had to be thankful for such an escape, he replied listlessly:

"What does it matter to me what you do? Take me to the tropics, or to Greenland; it is all the same

to me. I don't care whether you have millions and call yourself Douglass; can your fortune give me Lucie? Will all your scheming for me bring her back to life? No! Then how do you think that any plan you make can interest me? I shall obey you like a machine. There is no happiness for me now that Lucie is dead, so don't bother me about what you are going to do."

Several times I returned to the subject, but it was useless. It was indeed a machine I had to deal with, a machine from which I could draw nothing good. Polydore was entirely without a soul.

We had to take the express for Havre at ten o'clock, and as the hour drew near for me to take my son away from the asylum, I began to feel very anxious. The doctor wanted to come to the docks and see me off, and also to have the satisfaction of seeing his patient safely on board. I naturally could not object to that, but I had tried all in my power to prevent Evelyne and Marcadian from taking the trip to Havre. They insisted upon going. I was afraid Evelyne would do or say something imprudent.

I finally arranged matters fairly satisfactorily. I contrived that we should not all be together in

the same railway compartment. The doctor, Evelyne and Marcadian would go in a carriage alone, while Kingsley and I, with Z——, who was guarded by Bambou, would occupy a reserve carriage. Polydore looked very different from the miserable creature who had occupied cell No. 13. His new clothes were of the latest cut, the small, pointed beard and thick hair, brushed high from the forehead, gave him a certain distinguished air.

Nothing occurred during our railway journey that is worth relating. I prefer to arrive at once at the culminating point of my story, at that moment which was to be so fated to the destiny of us all—the moment when the big transatlantic ship raised her anchor and sailed out majestically from the port. This was the supreme moment when the greatest move was to be made—the move which I hoped would settle definitely the terrible adventures of my life. Polydore and I were disappearing without hope of return, and now the police would never be able to find a trace of us.

By the community of our secrets, I was now bound indissolubly to Addison Kingsley; I was sheltered by the most stupefying deception from all suspicions of the doctor, Marcadian and Evelyne. Apart from the latter two, whose primordial in-

terest was to keep silent forever, Polydore would henceforth be unknown to all.

The millionaire leaned with his elbows over the ship's rail. We were shoulder to shoulder. On the quays the hurried, moving crowd were saying the last good-by to the passengers of the Touraine. Evelyne was waving her handkerchief and the doctor his hat.

"Look," said the millionaire, as he passed me his glasses, "your daughter is crying, crying with joy, one might say. And my son looks as though he would like to do the same thing, but his would be tears of grief; he has grown quite fond of you, Charles. Ah! ah! how happy he was to have found his father!"

He turned away with a bitter laugh, and the look of fierce hatred flashed in his eyes which I had seen so often when he spoke of the doctor.

I watched Evelyne as she stood at the foot of the gangplank, looking up at us with tearful eyes. They were tears of joy! She was so happy to think I was going away and helping her unfortunate brother to escape. The doctor looked downcast; to him it was a cruel separation from the father whom he had just found after twenty years.

And I, who had played on their credulity, could

scarcely keep back my emotion as I watched Evelyne as she stood clinging to the arm of her future husband. My triumph carried its own bitterness.

"What, you also, Charles! You are absurd," Addison said. "You are as sentimental as a woman."

He lit a cigar and turned his back on me.

The steamer passed the line of the road.

We are off!

I heaved a sigh of relief, like the climber when he reaches the summit of the mountain, after weary efforts and countless dangers. And I felt a vague pride, for had I not risen above the past like the Alpinist rises above the valleys sleeping at his feet? As I stood on the dazzling height, I was so intoxicated with my triumph that I gave no thought to the descent which was to follow.

SECOND PART

DOUGLASS, KING OF THE WISE

CHAPTER XVIII

THE PHANTOM IN MID-OCEAN

"WELL, Charles, we are having a good crossing. No sea sickness! No annoyances! No regrets! It is perfect. Leave that wretched pipe alone and smoke a good cigar. How's your stateroom, comfortable? You have fallen into a rut, my friend. You must exert yourself. You look as cheerful as a man going to be beheaded!"

We were seated side by side on the upper deck, when Kingsley burst out in this disconnected and voluble manner. With his feet perched on the highest rung of the rail, his eyes on the horizon, he puffed at his large cigar, blowing out whiffs of tobacco on the fresh salt air. I did not reply to his questions. I looked thoughtfully out over the boundless ocean, with its small rippling waves.

Some passengers strolled up and down in couples. A group of children played noisily near our chairs.

It was our second day on board. I was prostrated. It was the reaction after the tumult of the past. I had passed a restless night on this ship that was carrying me toward my obscure destiny; the snoring of my fellow-travellers had kept me awake for hours.

This was the first time in my life that I had taken a sea voyage, and, strange to say, I did not experience any special impression. I tried to stimulate my imagination; I felt lost, isolated; amidst the come-and-go of this floating town, I was a package of the first class, but I was only a package.

"Where is your protégé?" Kingsley asked, after a silence. "I did not see him in the smoking room after breakfast."

"He is all right; he is behaving himself very well," I replied.

"You don't seem to look after him very much."

"That is because he does not need it."

Polydore had come a little out of his apathy. He had gone down below to see the machinery. My companion did not question me further about him.

"What do you say to a game of bridge at ten dollars a point?"

The size of the limit, strangely, did not surprise me coming from Kingsley, but I shook my head. He got up from his seat and was starting to go below when Bambou came forward to take his orders. They moved off a few steps; the servant had his back to me. I could not see his face, but from his gestures and the annoyance which spread over Kingsley's face I saw that the mysterious talk was of some importance. I was sure of it when I saw the millionaire walk quickly over to the steerage quarters. The Hindoo had remained in the same spot. He seemed to be pondering over something; at last he decided to twist around on his heels and come toward me.

"What is it, Bambou?" I said, without turning my head.

I started when I heard his voice.

"You make a mistake, moussir; I am not Bambou, I am Jim. Don't you remember me?"

I sprang to my feet! I caught him roughly by the arm, not knowing why.

"You are not dead?" I cried stupidly.

The man looked astonished, as well he might.

"Dead! Why should I be dead? I don't understand you, moussir."

When the man disappeared, after Lucie's death,

I thought that the millionaire, in order to efface all traces of his crime, had got rid of the servant in some foul manner. From the latter's attitude, when I found him in the garden at Neuilly, I was sure that he had been a witness to the crime committed in the room next to mine. Since that dreadful night, when the millionaire had destroyed my face, neither Kingsley nor his silent accomplice, Bambou, had ever spoken of the other Hindoo.

I had asked them both at different times what had become of Jim, and the only answer I received was a smile or a shrug of the shoulders. It seemed to me that these two brutes of different races had souls about as primitive as the other.

"Well, Jim, tell me what happened," I said, when I had got over my astonishment.

The Bengalese smiled. He lifted his two arms in the air, then let them fall by his side, like a goose when it flaps its wings.

" It's a long story, too long?" he said in his harsh voice.

That which was not long was the millionaire's return. His glance was furious. He laid a heavy hand on Jim's shoulder and said very angrily:

"Go back to your post and stay there."

The man was already in the forecastle, as the millionaire turned to me and said dryly:

"What was that animal saying to you?"

"He had just about time to say good day politely and cause me as much astonishment as though he had dropped from the clouds. I thought he was dead! That evening when——"

"Why dead?" said Kingsley, showing as much surprise as the Hindoo himself. "What made you think he was dead? I don't understand."

Then he continued in his rambling manner:

"I am too good. Jim is a bad servant. I ought to have sent him off that same evening. I can't place any confidence whatever in that man. I'll kill him if he thwarts my plans now!"

"Your plans?"

"In six days you will know all. I'll tell you then, and not before. By the bye, you don't look after that crazy fellow closely enough. In the future you will do me the pleasure of not letting him out of your sight. He is very valuable for what I want to do with him, and I am paying enough to insure his presence when I want him. Are you going down? There is the luncheon bell."

The second night was just as bad as the first that I spent on board the Touraine. As soon

as I fell off to sleep, I had one of the most awful nightmares! Jim's ghost flitted through my dreams, and, what was more agonizing, the ghost of murdered Lucie Weil!

Early the next day I went in search of the Hindoo in order to learn something of what had happened since he disappeared from the house in Neuilly. I searched high and low for him. I thought I explored every nook from the bridge to the boiler room, but Jim was nowhere to be found.

I was no more successful on the days that followed.

The voyage became irksome and disagreeable to me. Polydore was not one to make it more cheerful. He never spoke; he went about as though he were walking in his sleep. The millionaire scarcely left the card tables. He had made acquaintance with some Americans who were bridge fiends, so I passed my time leaning over the ship's rail with my back to the crowd, contemplating the ever-moving yet never-changing view of a horizon without end, a clear sky, and blue-green waters.

Our last night on board came; we were to land in New York on the morrow. That night by the light of the moon and the stars I witnessed a most unexpected scene!

It was midnight. I was just dropping off to sleep, when the green curtain of the stateroom I occupied was drawn along on its rod by a trembling hand! I sat up in my berth and in the faint gleam of the night light I saw my son, Polydore.

He stood by my bed, pale and trembling. In the dim light I could see that his face was twitching with nervous spasms. He was making an effort to articulate some words which he could not force from his strangled throat.

"What do you want, Polydore?" I said quietly.

Then in a voice that was rough and commanding he said:

"Give me five louis!"

With a quick glance I measured the distance which separated my hand from the washstand drawer, where I had placed my revolver. It was the instinctive movement of defence against an enraged animal which made me stretch out my hand.

"No, I am not mad. You cannot understand. I do not, either."

Then he repeated in a harsh voice:

"Give me five louis."

It was the same fierce intonation that he must have used to his poor mother, the same that he had

used later when he had asked me for the money. But in this place and at this moment there was no sense to it, no plausible reason. As I looked at his haggard eyes and his livid face, I felt that my unfortunate son was not feigning madness. This was a moment of veritable insanity.

Instead of arguing with him, I thought it better to humor him, so I reached down my coat and held out a blue note to him.

He took it. He opened the door quickly and went out, without a word. The moment he had gone I sprang from my bed and dressed myself hurriedly. I rushed on deck. It was a beautiful starry night. In the great silence of the peaceful calm of the ocean, the noise of the monster ship as it ploughed its way onward was phantomlike and weird. The dark silhouette of a sailor loomed here and there. I passed a man and a woman who stood silently gazing at the splendor of a night at sea. The formidable churning of the screws rhymed with the beating of my heart. I stumbled against a coil of rope. A plaintive moan came from a great form that was crouching on the deck. I stooped down and recognized Jim. His fists were clenched, and his great body shook with dry sobs.

"What's the matter, Jim?" I asked in a shaking voice.

He hissed some words I could not understand through his set teeth.

I made him get up and we moved to a bench nearby.

"I will kill him," the Bengalese said fiercely. "They are there by the rail in the bow of the boat. I love her so much—so much!"

I did not understand. I dared not understand! I fought against it like one does some horrible nightmare.

I seized the Hindoo by the wrist and drew him toward the spot that he had pointed out.

"Who do you love, Jim? Who do you want to kill? Speak!" I said hoarsely.

"Mademoiselle Lucie," he said, between his sobs.

My hair stood upon end with fright; a cold perspiration broke out on my forehead. Six steps from me, leaning over the side of the ship, with the clear moonlight shedding its silvery rays upon them, stood Polydore and Lucie Weil! They had not heard us.

With dilated pupils I filled my eyes and my brain with this strange sight. I saw the perfect profile, the large, languid eyes, the exquisite figure. It

was Lucie who stood there, more beautiful than ever. Lucie Weil living! Lucie Weil, the cause of the double drama that was being played between the millionaire and me! The girl was alive! I was forced to believe my eyes, and no longer doubt my reason.

"Let us go back," I said to Jim, in a low voice.

When we reached the other end of the boat I made him sit down.

"Tell me, Jim, that night at Neuilly, do you remember? The night I saw you with your face covered with blood. The night I jumped from the window after hearing Lucie cry out 'Murder'?"

"I remember," said the servant fiercely. "It was the evening that the master struck me. He found me on my knees before mademoiselle. I told her that I loved her. I told her I would help her to escape if she would come with me. She laughed in my face; she mocked me like she does every one, like she mocks the doctor, you, and every man."

"Never mind about that. What happened that night; why did she cry out 'Murder'?"

"The master struck me a blow in the face; my nose was broken; his hand was covered with blood."

"But why did both of you disappear after that?"

"Mr. Kingsley gave the order."

"What order?"

"To hide her away. I had to guard her in an apartment."

"And you lived there until we sailed?"

"Yes, and every day she made fun of me and mocked me. She is a wicked, beautiful woman, but I love her so much! I could kill her with my knife, because of that man with her, and I could kill him, too; but I'm afraid of hurting mademoiselle."

"Now, Jim," I said, "you are going to obey me; if you do not, I shall tell all to your master."

I took a louis out of my pocket and slipped it into his hand.

"Go to bed, now, and don't think of the passenger or of Mademoiselle Lucie. If you kill Lucie, Mr. Kingsley will strangle you like a dog. And if you harm the passenger you will have to deal with me. Understand?"

And the man went back sorrowfully to the steerage quarters.

All night long I tossed on my narrow bed, trying to pierce the future. Kingsley had brought Lucie, and I had brought Polydore. They met again!

All night long the words, "Give me five louis," rang in my ears. I was like a rag in the morning

when Kingsley came noisily into my cabin and cried out, laughing:

"Eh bien quoi, you sluggard, Charles! We are at the end of our journey, and also of our troubles. Get up and see our beautiful harbor, you false American!"

CHAPTER XIX

LUCIE CALLS AT THE WALDORF

I ENGAGED rooms at the Waldorf, according to the millionaire's orders. He lived on the avenue, ten minutes' walk from the hotel. Every morning he came to call for me to take me down to his office. I did not have a minute to myself. He treated me just as though I were the real Douglass.

He kept his word with a firm tenacity. He explained to me the working of his business and instructed me in my new duties with a simplicity of manner that was almost disconcerting. I took him as my model, and I soon adapted myself to my ambiguous position as though it were perfectly natural. He never referred to the past. In putting the ocean between me and my country I seemed to have lost my real personality, and I had now reached a point where I acknowledged but one will—the all-powerful will of Addison Kingsley, the paper king.

He went to considerable pains to teach me how

to fulfill satisfactorily the rôle which he had given me, and I ought to admit that I exerted all the energy and good will of which I was capable. He seemed pleased and congratulated me.

"Charles, you're the man," he said. "I was afraid I should clash with you. You were such a ninny. You were so womanish at times, but now I really think you have something in you. You are a trustworthy man and deserve your position. I have made a better deal of it than I thought."

The adoption of Z——, who occupied rooms with me at the Waldorf, was accomplished quickly. The formalities for adopting a child in America were not so complicated as in France. Henceforth Z—— would be known as Theodore Douglass, an American citizen. I gave him his liberty and plenty of money to spend. I had decided not to let him know what I had discovered on the boat. Neither did I tell the millionaire that I knew he was hiding Lucie Weil in his own home. It was quite certain that Polydore and Addison Kingsley thought I was their dupe.

I had no trouble in learning that Polydore passed his entire day with Lucie. They went all over town together.

"My father," he said one evening on returning

from the Metropolitan opera, "I am the happiest man in the world."

He stood before me faultlessly attired, his face beaming with happiness.

I bent my head to hide the hopelessness and grief that had crept into my eyes. My son had no soul! The miserable wretch whose passion had driven him to matricide was happy in having found the girl who was responsible for his mother's death and his father's expatriation, weak, soulless, abnormal creature that he was.

And he called it love—"love that makes the world go round," that stirs poor humanity from the cradle to the tomb!

I wanted to learn more about Lucie Weil, but it was difficult to satisfy my curiosity unless I broke through the reserve that I had imposed upon myself, so I was obliged to wait for events to run their course.

I had not long to wait, however. It seemed that mademoiselle wanted to satisfy her curiosity just as much as I did. Business called the millionaire out of town for a few days, and Lucie thought she would profit by his absence to pay me a visit at my hotel.

Her first words put me at my ease at once. Her

manner was just as frank as it had been in that accursed house in Neuilly.

"Well, I am not sorry to find you again," she said, as she held out her hand to me. "But what a face! Mon Dieu! but your looks have not improved. Your face looks as though it had been skinned to enable one to study the muscles."

Instead of being annoyed at her tone, I tried to reply in the same manner.

"And you, my little friend, you make me feel as though I were meeting one returned from the dead, but I am not afraid of ghosts."

I took her furs from her and led her to a comfortable chair.

"Well," she said, "couldn't you order some sherry? It will make the conversation run smoothly, and, besides, I am thirsty."

I rang and ordered the wine.

"So you are not dead?" I said, smiling at her.

She burst into one of her gay laughs, which showed off so well her pearly teeth behind her scarlet lips.

"Your jokes are gruesome, monsieur. Now, talk little and talk well. Time is money, they say here in America, you know, and we do not have the chance to see each other every day. Mr. Kings-

ley has forbidden me to call upon you, but I could not help it."

"That's very nice, coming from an old fiancée," I replied, smiling.

She went off into a peal of laughter again. The remembrance of our marriage banns published at Neuilly drew tears of mirth to her eyes. When she had recovered she drank off two glasses of sherry.

"Oh, Charles," she said, "to think that I was almost forced to marry you. Poor me! But there, we must put sentiment to one side and proceed with the business in hand. Who is this Theodore Douglass, this youth who has fallen from the skies like an aëroplane?"

"He is my adopted son, Lucie."

"Really?"

"Yes, he ought to have told you, and Mr. Kingsley would have confirmed it."

"How strange!" she said, knitting her brows. "I knew him in the Latin Quarter, when I knew Dr. Kingsley. He was madly in love with my little person, like a good many others. I did not attach any importance to it. I don't even remember his name. But here, all of a sudden, I find he is your heir, and this nice boy—for he is quite nice—who hadn't a sou in Paris, gives me jewels, and Mr.

Kingsley knows about it and approves of it. Admit that it is strange, Charles."

After a silence she said:

"Now, tell me why you told all that humbug to your son."

"What humbug?"

"Things that were quite false. Why did you tell him that I threw vitriol in your face and that I was dead?"

"So as to put an end to the foolish passion that he had for you," I said calmly.

She shrugged her shoulders.

"Quite clever of you, but you see you did not succeed," she said, looking at me with mocking eyes.

She was silent for a moment. Then she said seriously:

"Theodore is not like William Kingsley. If he has set his heart on anything—you know——"

"I shall not stand in his way," I said.

"Then, although he is only your adopted son, you have more feeling for him than Mr. Kingsley had for William. You are the sort of American that I like, and Teddy is so nice, you know!"

Then the little minx said, in her usual candid manner:

"Really, Charles, you have—tell me exactly—how many dollars?"

"About twenty millions."

"Now in francs."

"One hundred million francs."

Her eyes grew large. Her delicate nostrils quivered as though she were inhaling some delicious perfume.

Before she left I thought I heard Polydore open his door at the other end of the apartment and go out quietly.

Ah! it is the women without souls who can take the souls away from men!

CHAPTER XX

ADDISON KINGSLEY'S SCHEME

WHAT seemed most astonishing was the way I threw myself into my new business. I, who had never been able to confine myself to methodical work and had all my life been a stranger to what one calls business, became, by daily contact with the millionaire, a clear-headed business man. I acquired a wealth of ideas and a capacity for work which made my benefactor beam with pleasure. I knew that the only cure for my troubles was hard work, and I threw myself into the administration of his formidable organization with an energy that surprised Kingsley more each day, and he frankly showed me his appreciation.

I had only to think of the business now. I did not even wish to know what would happen since Polydore had met Lucie Weil again. I was tired of scheming. Things would have to take their course.

On his return to New York, the millionaire, in whose hands we were merely puppets of no importance, condescended to tell me his plans for the future, and I must admit that his disclosure gave me as great a surprise as that which I had received in Marcadian's office in Paris when he had carried me off in his automobile to Neuilly.

As the millionaire began to unfold his plan to me I vaguely felt that the terrible adventure was not ending as I had so hoped, but that, on the contrary, it was developing into a dangerous phase. Alas! neither he nor I was able to foresee the fatal dangers that would result from this move. I felt a physical recoil—I wanted to rebel against his scheme—but I had to consider my daughter's future, and I also had to take into account the abnormal condition of my son.

Between my two children I was as wheat between millstones. I was nothing. I did not count. I was simply the supernumerary of a frightful tragedy that was coming, and the denouement was now beyond my feeble means of control. And the insignificant part that Kingsley had assigned to me—the unique *deus ex machina* of the drama—had no importance in the development of the piece which was going to be played between the eternal pro-

tagonists of Life, the Man and the Woman—between Polydore and Lucie in America, and the doctor and Evelyne in France.

It was a few days after the millionaire's return from New England that he called to see me one evening at my hotel. We had been at the office together during the day, but, as he explained to me, this was a little confidential business that we would arrange over a quiet smoke.

"Charles," he began, "we shall soon be beginning another year, and I am going to make a change. Through your abilities you are now holding a high position. You do not know the town of Holyoke, where we have our three most important mills. It is not at all a gay town, I can assure you, but I know you like work, so I am going to send you there to superintend the business. You will have six thousand workmen under your charge. The house I have had fitted up for you is comfortable and sumptuous. You can thank me for all I am doing for you when you find time."

"So be it," I said briefly. (With my partner, it was foolish to speak if one had nothing to say.) "I'll take Teddy with me."

"No, you won't."

"Why?"

"Because he is good for nothing but to loaf around and enjoy himself, and one does not amuse oneself at Holyoke. You will settle an income of ten thousand dollars upon him, so that you will not be ashamed of him. Let him run about. Let him live like the imbecile that he is, and will always be. I'll look after the rest."

"The rest?"

"Yes. Don't look so foolish, Charles. You know that Lucie Weil is living. She is at my house. She told me about her visit to you. So it is time that I tell you what I intend doing and why I have kept this young girl to help me with my vengeance."

"Your vengeance!" I cried. "What vengeance?"

"You ask what vengeance, wretched egotist! You have forgotten what I am. You don't suppose for one moment that *you* personally interest me, or your daughter, Evelyne. I have only one object in life. All these years I have waited to have a complete revenge—the revenge I should have had on the one who betrayed my honor. It now falls upon her son."

"I don't see it," I said.

"Evidently you do not. You are not in a position to see. You have let yourself be taken in by appearances. You believe, in good faith, that Wil-

liam loves your daughter Evelyne. Bah! You are as blind as that fool Marcadian. You do not understand a woman like Lucie Weil. Why, the girl is beautiful. Do you think that if a man loved her he could throw aside his passion as suddenly as William did? You think, in your simplicity, that one can throw off this tunic of Nessus as easily as one does a domino at a masquerade ball.

"William, in his wounded vanity, tried to deceive himself. He tried to think that he no longer cared for her, and so he threw himself head first at the first girl who happened to come along, and she turned out to be your daughter Evelyne. It also happened at an opportune moment that you appeared on the scene, as though made to order from a pattern, to play the part of William's real father.

"And you think it was all marvelous! There is nothing marvelous about it. There was the sure concentration of a will that was mine—the will that has schemed and planned and accumulated all the chances to my side, so that I can now have my revenge in full."

"I think," I said coldly, "that you exaggerate your power."

"It is you who diminish Lucie Weil's power. I

tell you, the doctor can esteem you as a father and respect Evelyne as his wife, but both you and he are deceiving yourselves if you think that he loves Evelyne. He worships and will always worship Lucie Weil. Do you think that he would have thrown aside my fortune for Evelyne? Do you think that if I had taken Evelyne away from him, as I did Lucie, he would have entered into a conflict for her? No! No! But I tempted Lucie with money and she was ready to throw him over. Ah! ah! how that stung him, and he went to Evelyne for consolation. You need not take offense at what I am saying, Charles, but let me tell you it is not a sweet, good girl like Evelyne who could win the doctor's love. It is the women like Lucie Weil who wield the greatest power over men's hearts! You and Marcadian were blind fools to try and make him care for Evelyne."

The millionaire gazed at me with a look of pitying irony.

"What a weakling you are, Charles!" he continued. "Did you really think that I was capable of killing Lucie? At first I thought you were doing a bit of acting when you rushed into the kitchen that night. Probably you also think I killed my wife?"

"I do not think so now. William gave me a proof that you did not," I replied.

"And what about Douglass?"

"I am quite sure you are guilty of that crime," I said firmly.

"You are making a mistake, my friend. I did not kill Charles Douglass. He fell over Niagara Falls just as I told you, but I had no hand in his death. I have only one regret in life—a regret that haunts me in a different way from what you call remorse. It is that I did not kill Douglass. I have lived under a cloud all these years. Many thought that I killed him. I have been shunned, I have suffered, but I swear that he met his death by accident. Ah! I ought to have killed him.

"I shall taste a little of my revenge," he continued, "the day when William learns that you are not Douglass, the day when he learns that he has been imposed upon by a stranger! He has cherished a stranger as a father, he has given him a son's affection! Ah, ah! that will hurt as much as anything!"

"He will never know," I said vehemently.

"How do you know he will not, my friend?" sneered the millionaire.

"It is not in your power to undo what you have done."

"Fool!" he said. "One cannot argue with you. Let us return to Lucie Weil."

And he explained his plan to me in a dry and imperative voice.

"Lucie is to marry your adopted son," he began. "I am going to give them fifty thousand dollars, as you will. Then they can give themselves the pleasure of waiting for our death for the rest. Square the figures, Charles. Now, attention! Here is the approximate statement of the two wills that I have had prepared by a lawyer. I have left Lucie Weil the half of my fortune—ten million dollars. You will leave to Theodore the same sum, and to your daughter Evelyne the other half—that is, if you like."

"You are leaving all this money to these two so as to deprive William of three-quarters," I said quietly.

"It will not be that which will hurt him. He does not care about money. It is not in that way that I am going to strike him."

"How are you going to strike?" I asked.

"That is a secret that the future holds," he said, "but for the present rest assured that he will

suffer deeply to learn that Lucie is living and that we deceived him about the vitriol and that the idiot in his asylum was your son and that you and I are accomplices who intend to marry the idiot to the girl he loves and wants for his wife. When he knows that, his hatred for me will increase a thousandfold and his filial love for you will submit to a fatal eclipse. Ah! ah! my plan is working well."

I smiled at the millionaire's pretension, and I said with a certain haughtiness:

"We shall see. But I am not quite so sure that your plan will work so well as you think."

CHAPTER XXI

LUCIE'S VANITY

LUCIE was the millionaire's protégée. In his luxurious home, amidst the glittering display of wealth, by a sort of irony of fate, she reigned as a queen, one might say. She had a certain grace and charm, and seemed quite at her ease in Kingsley's mansion. The sumptuous surroundings were a fitting frame for her undeniable beauty. She did not seem at all astonished at her immense good fortune. She accepted it with the same indifference that she had shown when she had been held in seclusion in the house at Neuilly. She took everything as it came. Her approaching marriage with my adopted son, however, seemed to give her entire satisfaction. She took great pleasure in treating me as an elderly man of no consequence, and one day when we were alone she played a little part that I was not expecting.

"Charles," she said, "there is a delicate matter upon which I should like to consult you."

She rang for her maid.

"Bring me those boxes you placed in my room this morning," she said.

The boxes contained the trousseau that had been ordered for her when I was to have married her at Neuilly.

She unfolded the white bridal gown carefully, shook the shimmering silk, and said in a voice that was almost reverent:

"Isn't it beautiful? Exquisite? You can understand how I like it. I was obliged to bring it with me. I could not part from it. And I thought, perhaps, you would not mind, Charles, if——"

For a moment I had nothing to say. I was on the point of bursting out laughing, and yet I had a feeling of sadness. She at once put my silence down to regrets, for she said quickly:

"Oh, Charles! Then you did really love me, after all."

"That I did not," I said indignantly.

Kingsley came in at that moment, and, taking me familiarly by the arm, drew me into the smoking room.

"What is she bringing that bridal dress out for?" he said, laughing. "To bring back the past and make you regret, I suppose."

I laughed.

"It is possible," I said.

We had fixed the day of the wedding for the 26th. It was also on the 26th that the doctor and Evelyne were going to be married in Paris. Marcadian had written me a letter, four pages long, telling me the preparations that were being made and the date on which they would be married, so Kingsley had fixed Lucie's wedding for the same day. I wanted to get these two marriages over, so that I could turn more than ever to business, and thus take a new interest in life.

One evening I was at my hotel taking my cup of tea when Polydore burst in upon me excitedly. He dropped into a chair quite out of breath.

"We can't get married on the 26th," he said at last.

"Why?"

"It's all through that Jim! I told him to take Lucie's papers to the City Hall for the legal formalities, but he did not get them there on time, and that puts the affair off for some days."

He paused and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief.

"It's absurd, too absurd!" he said, as though talking to himself.

"What is?" I asked, not understanding.

"Why, the way Lucie fascinates men. She seems to be able to charm any man, but in this case it is ridiculous—a Hindoo servant!"

He broke into a nervous laugh.

"She has made that poor Bengalese crazy over her," he continued. "He would sacrifice his life for her. And she laughs and mocks him! I never heard of anything so ridiculous."

"Why ridiculous?" I said. "I should find it far more natural that a little milliner should marry an honest valet than to be in the position where she is now! Her beautiful eyes have wrecked your life, and I am afraid have made greater havoc than we think with Dr. Kingsley's."

Polydore looked at me, and then said, in a slow, deep voice:

"I am certain now that she does not care for me any more than she cared for William Kingsley. There is only one thing she loves in the world—that is money, or, rather, the brilliant life that money can procure. That is her only passion."

"I found out that long ago," I replied. "Lucie is a beautiful woman without a soul, and her power of fascination is so much the more because she is honest. She is like a beautiful light—she attracts

the moths, and they singe their wings, but it does not hurt her."

"So be it. I'll scorch my wings. I cannot reason. I love her too much. She is so beautiful and pure."

Polydore's abjectness was pitiful.

"I think?" I said, after a silence, "that from a man like you and a schemer like Lucie the worst is to be feared. Your passion has no excuse and her influence over you no limit. I think that Mr. Kingsley has made the biggest mistake of his life in bringing about this match. I have decided to leave town to-morrow. You can get married without me. Adieu, my son."

And I got up and left him.

CHAPTER XXII

KINGSLEY IS DESPONDENT

I PASSED a whole year in the factories at Holyoke, working like a machine. I worked fourteen hours a day. It was only in this way that I was able in some way to forget the past.

I heard regularly from Paris. Marcadian's letters were friendly in the extreme, the doctor's full of a filial affection, and Evelyne's, to my great regret, were the shortest, and only spoke about Z——.

Polydore and Lucie, since the marriage, had trotted over the principal towns of the United States, and whenever I had a letter from my son it was always a demand for money. One hundred thousand dollars was not enough for Lucie's extravagances. She, on her side, made the same appeal to the millionaire's generosity, but he paid no attention to her.

Each time that Kingsley came to Holyoke I found him more and more irritable. Toward the last days of autumn, when we were taking the in-

ventory for the end of the year, I saw him for the first time show an utter lack of interest in the figures.

One morning he spoke to me without restraint.

"Charles," he said, "I am beginning to break down. I am glad now that you are here with me. I never thought you could go to work as you have. Thanks to your untiring energy, our earnings have gone up a third."

And he enumerated all the fortunate strokes I had made and congratulated me warmly. Then, with one of his sudden changes, he said gloomily:

"Charles, I am afraid that after all that I have done all my scheming and planning will be useless. I am afraid I have been mistaken."

"About what?"

"About William."

"Why don't you say about Lucie?"

"Lucie is but an instrument. From the moment that her marriage fails to have any effect on William she is of no use. William knows now that she is living, that she did not throw the vitriol at you and that we were forcing her to marry you. He knows that she is now married to Z——, the miserable idiot that we took from his asylum. He knows that you have been my accomplice. He

knows that we have given to this well-matched couple a fortune equal to that which he is entitled to. He has known all that for a month, and he does not rise up against you or against me. I have not heard a word from him. It is incomprehensible!"

The proud paper king seemed for a moment a broken-down old man, without energy—defeated. Never had I seen him so physically and morally nonplussed. His head dropped forward on his chest and he remained silent for several minutes. Then suddenly he struck the desk with his fists. He stood up before me, drawing his figure to its full height. He was now the man who was capable of making all bow to his will.

He strode from one end of my office to the other.

"I have not made a mistake! It is impossible. I know he cares."

I was silent, but I could easily have told him that, unhappily, his calculations had been too correct. Only fifteen days before I had received a letter of violent recriminations from the doctor, in which he upbraided me for having odiously deceived him about Lucie Weil. I had led him to believe that she was dead. Between the lines of this hopeless letter it was easy to see that the millionaire's per-

spicacious intuition of the future was correct and that the doctor's love for Lucie was as deep as ever. Perhaps the future would even pass his calculations, daring as they were, and his revenge fall more heavily than he anticipated on the doctor, who was innocent of any crime.

But I told him nothing about the letter. Why should I give him the satisfaction of knowing that his cruel revenge was working so well? And when the inventory terminated and he left Holyoke to return to New York, in a state of utter dejection, I watched him go, little dreaming that I should never look upon him again, this man so robust in health, who had worked and paid so dearly for a vengeance that he was not destined to enjoy, even when events brought it about in a manner more dreadful than he had ever imagined!

Eight days later I received a letter from Marcadian. He wrote:

"You cannot understand the seriousness of the situation. Evelyne has had the weakness to confess to her husband who the man was you took away from his asylum. It is impossible for me to tell you in this letter who he really is, although I know that we should have all your sympathy. I hope that as soon as possible you will be able to make a visit to France. Your son is laboring under

the illusion that you and I worked together to bring about this marriage between his patient Z—— and Lucie Weil. Nothing that I can say can convince him that he has made an error. If you came over you would be able to clear the misunderstanding at once."

The letter fell from my hands. My poor little Evelyne! I saw clearly the seriousness of the situation. She was only a frail girl, and she had had the weakness to confess to her husband that Z——, the abnormal creature, was her brother Polydore. And the doctor had thought that I helped Addison Kingsley in his scheme and that Marcadian had had a hand in the matter. I now understood his recriminations, his suspicion and the insulting tone of his letter. Alas! the foresight, the calculations of the dishonored husband, who was now wreaking his vengeance on the innocent son, had been correct.

I felt with a vague premonition that we were all going to suffer through the subsequent events, so I decided to take Marcadian's advice and return to France.

I had my trunks packed. I was ready to go, when the sudden arrival of my son Polydore and his wife forced me to delay my journey.

CHAPTER XXIII

POLYDORE'S DUAL CHARACTER

WHAT could Polydore and his wife want at Holyoke, a place that offered anything but pleasure—a busy city where each factory was like a small town, and all its human swarm bound mysteriously by one soul, which is the soul of the crushing force of production to excess?

What could these two pleasure-seeking creatures want in a cheerless city in the depth of winter? I did not flatter myself that it was to see me. I had not seen my son for a year. I was struck by the change in him. He carried his excessive happiness on his beaming face. He was handsome, distinguished, and his bearing had assumed a certain haughtiness that amazed me. As to Lucie, she was more beautiful than ever. The luxury with which she was surrounded seemed to lend a greater charm to her power of fascination. Their mutual happiness had only one little drawback, and they did not try to hide it. I had not made a mistake—it was

an appeal to my purse, not my affections, that they had come to make.

"We are perfectly happy except for one thing," Lucie said, sighing. "Living is so much more expensive in America than in France. The dollars melt in the fingers here more quickly than the sous in Paris."

"One hundred thousand dollars for you two ought to be enough," I said ironically. "That is five hundred thousand francs income for any one who knows how to count."

"What is five hundred thousand francs?" she said dreamily, her large eyes looking straight ahead as though in an unfathomable dream.

She got up and went up to Polydore and embraced him and said affectionately:

"With Teddy, of course, I do not mind poverty. But, Charles, you do not spend all your income, and I often wonder why you recognize Teddy as your son if you make him so unhappy."

"Have you already made a little speech like that to Mr. Kingsley?" I asked.

"With Mr. Kingsley it is not the same," said the frivolous beauty. "He owes me a debt of gratitude. It is a compensation that is due to me. He fixed it at so much—and it is so much. And, be-

sides, that man hasn't a heart, while you, Charles ——"

Polydore bent his head in approval of what his wife said. The lovely little demon was able to mold in her frail, slim fingers all his ideas.

I thought it better policy to nip their hopes in the bud, and I said in a decided tone:

"Don't nourish any vain hopes of getting any more money from me with your flattery. Your income is sufficient, and if you have only come to see me for that you may as well go back from where you came."

Lucie got up quickly from the sofa where she was sitting. She threw me a look which seemed to change her fair face entirely. For a moment she looked hideous. She touched Polydore on the arm as he sat looking embarrassed and almost ashamed, and said:

"Come along, Teddy; we won't stay long enough to get musty in this hole."

This "hole" was my home, where I was their kind and meek host, but not meek enough to be an imbecile.

They gave me to understand that evening after dinner that they would be leaving the next day. It is needless to say that I felt relieved. I had told

Polydore how unhappy Evelyne was, and he had seemed perfectly indifferent. From his manner one would have thought that Evelyne was a stranger to him. He was indifferent to everything and everybody but his wife.

He said to me calmly:

"Why do you mix up with things that do not concern you? You are now an exceptionally fortunate man. A few thanks are due to me that you hold your present position. You will be foolish to return to Paris and put your finger between the tree and the trunk at the risk of being pinched. If I had any authority over you, father, I should say that it is a good thing my visit has hindered you from taking the voyage. It has done some good, at least."

The next day I received a cable message from Marcadian, which brought me a ray of hope. Surely all things would be put right now and Evelyne and the doctor would be happy, after all. Marcadian had sent me the news that Evelyne was the mother of a beautiful boy and girl. My little grandchildren! To me the names they had given to them were the prettiest in the world. Again and again I said them over to myself, "Pierre and Suzanne." I was beginning again to give orders to have my

things packed for my journey, which had been postponed by Polydore's arrival, when my son came into the room where I was.

I turned to him. He staggered like a drunken man. His face was livid. He dropped to the sofa where Lucie the night before had reclined in all her voluptuous beauty. He looked at me with fixed eyes and drawn brows. I saw again Z—— as he had been in the madhouse at Saint Mande; I saw again Polydore Barrabas as he had been on that fatal morning at Bry-sur-Marne.

From his choking throat his muffled voice could scarcely come forth.

"You must go back to France!" he shouted. "You must! You have not an instant to lose! Go, or——"

These strange words and his agitated manner caused me some uneasiness. Only the night before he had told me not to take the journey. He did not know that I had received a letter from Marcadian, so what did these strange words mean? What did the stuttering of his voice, the ghastly pallor of his skin and the terror of his look mean?

I went up to him.

"Explain yourself, Polydore," I said sternly.

"I repeat, you must go at once," he said, in a

hoarse voice; "at once, or I cannot master myself."

He passed his hand across his forehead.

"You do not understand what I am feeling! You cannot understand!"

"Did Lucie send you?"

He gave a sinister laugh at my question—a laugh which showed his healthy teeth like the teeth of a young wolf.

"No, Lucie did not send me," he said. "It is the other man in possession of me again."

And suddenly, with a nervous shudder, he dropped his head in his hands and broke into heart-breaking sobs. Through his convulsions I could hear his broken words:

"Mother! Mother! Father, don't you understand what is coming over me? It is horrible. You are rich, and you refuse me money for Lucie. You won't give me the money. Mother would not give me the money for her fête—the five louis for the little ring I wanted to give her. Go, father; I am not master of myself. It is the other man who is master."

He stopped, frightened at his own words.

"Ah!" I cried. "You have the soul of an assassin, and you would dare—you would dare——"

It is not I. I will confess all. Something has

come upon me. Some force unknown to me is urging me to do—I do not know. I know only one thing—it is that Lucie rules my soul. Understand?"

"Yes, at last I understand," I replied. "I understand that that woman is your evil spirit and that you cannot escape from your fate and that you are doomed."

"That is it," he said, in a dull voice.

"I understand that she has armed your hand to strike your father just as you, on account of her, struck your mother."

He lowered his head.

"This woman would like to see me out of the way, so as to inherit the rest of the money as soon as possible."

His head bent lower.

"Ah!" I cried, with a voice trembling with indignation. "I hear you still after your poor mother's death, say to me: 'Will my suicide be sufficient punishment to atone for my terrible crime?' You were right, Polydore. Your punishment was that woman, and your punishment is commencing."

"Then," said he, holding up his head and looking at me strangely, "you refuse to double our income?

You refuse me fifty thousand dollars like mother refused me five louis?"

He made a vague movement with his hand. Then it fell down limply by his side.

"I have told you!" he said. "Go, father, go! I beg of you. It is stronger than I. There is a steamer on the German line sailing to-morrow. I have consulted the week's bulletin. Take that boat, father, I implore you!"

He went from the room, with bent shoulders and lowered head, bearing the weight of his terrible confession.

"What are you going to do?" I asked.

"I don't know," he replied, in a dull voice. "We have shouldered arms; we shall probably change shoulders."

CHAPTER XXIV

WHAT THEY MEAN BY CHANGING SHOULDERS

POLYDORE was right. There was a German steamer sailing, which would stop at Cherbourg. Instead of waiting until the end of the week for the French boat, I thought it better to telephone at once to New York and book my stateroom on board the Demckerland. I wanted to see Evelyne and the doctor and set things right with them. I wanted to blot out the thought of Polydore and his wife with the sight of Evelyne as a little mother. I wanted to see my little grandchildren—Pierre and Suzanne. I would try to throw off from my memory the terrible scene where Polydore had stood up before me just as he had before my poor wife. Could it be possible that all that had been accomplished up till now had been in vain? Was my son at heart really an assassin? Were things beginning again at their starting point by this mental aberration of my miserable son? I had tried to think that Gabrielle's death had been

an accident, and now I tried to think that his gesture as he stood before me was a feint.

He and Lucie had left Holyoke. I had not even asked them where they were going. I also was leaving that night by the nine o'clock train.

I was in my traveling suit, standing by my desk, giving my last orders to my secretary, when the telephone rang out sharply.

I put the receiver to my ear.

"Hello! Yes, this is Mr. Douglass. Yes."

The voice at the other end was excited. I could scarcely understand what was said. I asked that the words be repeated. Then I heard:

"This is John Fellows, Mr. Kingsley's secretary."

"Yes. What is it?"

"Mr. Kingsley has been mur——"

"What do you say? I don't understand."

"Hello! Mr. Kingsley has been murdered."

The buzzing at my temples was like the noise of the whole machinery of the factory. I thought that my head was going to burst. My fingers stiffened as they gripped the receiver.

"Tell me who did it," I said, in an authoritative voice.

The secretary seemed to hesitate.

"A young man whom you know!"

"It was Teddy," I cried. "I know it was Teddy! The wretch!"

Overcome by a convulsive trembling, I must have been a fearful sight to look upon, for my secretary jumped up quickly.

"What is it, Mr. Douglass? Are you ill?"

I seized my valise, which contained some important papers, and without a word, my teeth clinched in impotent rage, I rushed out like a madman and arrived at the station just in time to catch a train. All through my journey my brain whirled, but one tangible thought held me in a vise. It burned my brain like a red-hot iron. Polydore had killed Addison Kingsley!

When? How? Poor John Fellows had not had the courage to tell me. Besides, I was perhaps the only one who knew the motive of the crime, since the assassin had said to me only the day before, "We shall probably change shoulders." Was he arrested? His accomplice, was she incriminated?

When I reached New York, John Fellows, to whom I had telegraphed from a station en route, was there to meet me.

He shook hands, and said quietly:

"I am very glad you have come. It is very strange; it is dreadful."

I was dazed. I did not even ask him anything. The automobile which took us to the millionaire's home sped along at a great rate. Behind was another car, which had followed us. It stopped when we did, and I saw two men, whom I noticed on the train, alight. I noticed, without attaching any importance, a quick look pass between John Fellows and the two strangers.

In the room where the crime had been committed seven men were gathered, representing the press and the police. They moved away courteously to make room for me, a courtesy which I put down to the respect in which they held the partner and the friend of the paper king.

Silence reigned throughout the room. All eyes were fixed on me.

I felt overcome with emotion as I looked down at the man who had befriended me. The men looked at me without uttering a word. It seemed to me that they were sympathizing with my grief.

On poor Kingsley's set face there was an expression of undeniable authority which impressed me greatly. I put a knee to the ground and for one moment bent piously over the body. One of the

men, who seemed to have some authority, came up to me and said, in a low voice:

"He could not have suffered much. He was killed instantaneously—shot through the heart while he was seated at his desk. He was shot with his own revolver, so as to make one believe it was suicide."

"Is the murderer under arrest?" I asked hoarsely.

"The one who is suspected of the murder is, but he had accomplices."

"Is she arrested?" I asked.

"She?" said the man, drawing back a step.

Then, putting his hand amiably on my shoulder, he said:

"Mr. Douglass, I said accomplices. Your adopted son and his wife are in custody, but the police do not stop at that."

"Teddy and Lucie are arrested," I said weakly. "Are you sure, officer, that it is my son who has committed this crime?"

"I think, Mr. Douglass, you will be the one to help us decide that question. You know more about this affair than we do."

"What do you mean?" I cried.

I looked at the faces of the men. They had drawn themselves into a circle around me.

"Mr. Douglass," said the man in authority, "you are the principal accuser of your son, the man who is in custody for the murder of Mr. Kingsley."

"I?" I cried, aghast. "What do you mean?"

"You have sought, as a means of defense, to charge your adopted son in order to exonerate yourself."

"To exonerate myself from what?" I said wildly.

"Of being an accomplice. The law will not have as much trouble as you think to establish that charge against you," he said dryly.

I was stupefied.

Then he laid his hand on my shoulder and said:

"Come along. I want you. No! No! You might just as well come without any trouble."

In less time than it takes to write it, four of the men who had come with him seized me and pushed me from the room, where my poor partner lay in solemn state on his bed, his voice silenced for eternity, his eyes closed forever to the light of day—a victim of his own revenge. He looked like some idol that had been sacrificed to its own religion.

CHAPTER XXV

THE PROCEEDINGS

I MUST congratulate myself that I have never had to put up with the discomforts of a French prison, but as for the American prisons, I must admit that I was agreeably surprised at the treatment I received while in prison in New York. Of course, I missed the luxuries to which I had been accustomed, but I found the assiduous jailers as eager to please me as my own servants. It is evident my being a millionaire counted for something.

My brilliant lawyer, Mr. Teck, had the same preoccupation as the most humble of the jailers when he said to me in his cool American manner:

"Mr. Douglass, how much will you increase my fees if I save your life?"

Or again:

"What sacrifice are you ready to make to save your adopted son the maximum punishment? He was not caught in the act and has not admitted his crime. It is stated by unquestionable witnesses that

for a quarter of an hour he was alone with Mr. Kingsley in his office. It is certain that several of the assistants saw him go out of the room in a state of great excitement, which leaves the field open to every hypothesis. Here is justice facing a double problem, of which the solution is somewhat difficult."

I had listened attentively to my lawyer. Then I said calmly:

"Then there is no actual proof?"

"Well, you unfortunately accused your son, Mr. Douglass. Scarcely ten minutes after the crime had been discovered you made a terrible accusation against him. When Mr. Kingsley's secretary telephoned the news to you at Holyoke, out of consideration for your feelings, he refrained from telling you the name of the man who was suspected. You asked him. He did not reply. Then your cry through the telephone throws a light on the situation—a compromising light. 'It is Teddy! Teddy! The wretch!' you called out. Therefore, by inference, it was a formal accusation, if it was not more."

"More! What do you mean by more?"

"It was obviously an avowal of conspiracy that escaped you unawares."

"Mr. Teck, you are on the wrong track."

"Listen a moment, and see if the court will get on the wrong track," replied the advocate. "The court will ask you what your son and his wife were doing at Holyoke, where they stayed two days before the crime. What will you reply?"

"That he and his wife came to make a demand on my purse, and I gave them a point-blank refusal."

"Exactly! That is your first system of defense. That will augment the charges which weigh on the accused. Besides, on this subject, the court is informed by the affidavit of your son and his wife, which is exactly alike. It knows that the accused and his wife came to New York to make the same appeal to Mr. Kingsley, and it is to be presumed the victim likewise refused them. By these premises the motive of the crime appears perfectly clear. Your adopted son killed your partner so that his wife would benefit by his will, which had been made in her favor."

"Purely a hypothesis," I replied.

"Hypothesis, so be it, but a likely hypothesis—just as likely as that which will spread around you. By your unguarded speech to John Fellows over the telephone you irremediably accused your adopted son; by your haste to book your passage the night

before the crime on board the Demckerland you inculpate yourself still more irremediably."

"But did I not return at once when John Fellows told me?" I cried.

"That may be so, but you can't get away from the fact that your flight was all arranged and that you had sent your luggage on board the German steamer and that you were going to take the train at nine o'clock. This is a ticklish business, and I shall want a very large sum to bring you out of this ugly scrape. It needs a very large sum, indeed!"

I did not reply, for just at that moment a thoughtful jailer came into my cell, and, with all the respect due to a millionaire prisoner, placed some whisky, seltzer and cigars on the table before us.

The weeks passed. The inquest assumed considerable proportions. Information regarding the past life of the man I was impersonating, on Teddy's past and on his wife's past accumulated. The affair was the talk of the country. At Holyoke, where I was well known; at Boston, where Charles Douglass had been known—everywhere the murder of the paper king stirred up the liveliest interest. My lawyer informed me that they were betting fifteen to one on my head.

The inquiry continued.

One morning Mr. Teck came to the prison before the hour of his usual visit. For the first time I saw this cool, collected man look worried. He threw his brief case down on the table with an air of discouragement.

"It will require even a greater sum of money than I named to get you off," he said, "and if the charges continue to accumulate against you all your enormous fortune will hardly suffice."

"What is there new?" I asked calmly.

"News comes from the old world. Madame's past is known."

"Puh!" I said, shrugging my shoulders, although I felt vaguely anxious.

"It is known that she was going to marry Dr. Kingsley, the victim's son, but the marriage was stopped."

"Mr. Kingsley stopped it," I said.

"No, it was you. It is said that you had your banns published to marry her in Neuilly."

"What then?"

"Well, they know your adopted son's past."

"All the past?" I asked slowly.

A terrible fear clutched at my heart. "Who told them? Teddy himself?"

"Not he. He hasn't opened his mouth. He is

feigning madness now—the same as he did when you found him in the asylum, where he was known simply as Z——"

"You know——"

"The police know all, and it crushes you. For twenty years you were supposed to be dead. It is like the story of Rip Van Winkle, for all of a sudden you come back to exact—to exact—there is not another word—the fulfillment of the old contract which bound you to Mr. Kingsley, making you his equal partner. But your ambition did not stop there. You conceived the idea of drawing from the victim the rest of his tremendous fortune by the most daring plan, the most unheard of plot. The police have heard that you found two willing creatures in France who became the passive executors of your abominable project—an adventuress and an idiot—and this youth you took from a madhouse, this unknown creature you adopt as your son, without rhyme or reason, and you give him an income which makes him independent! You must admit that it is amazing—altogether inconceivable!"

"I know it! I admit it! It is amazing!" I said.

"But that is not all," cried the lawyer, warming up. "So fabulous as your scheme appears, the final working out is still more baffling. The law asks by

what extraordinary means, by what strange influence, did you succeed in making Mr. Kingsley sign a will in favor of that girl, after having, so as to further your own plan, made her marry your adopted son."

"That is the Gordian knot of the whole affair, and I do not see very well how you are going to unravel it unless I help you a little."

"You are making an error," replied the shrewd lawyer. "The pivot of the affair is the undeniable motive of interest—the interest of your son's wife. All the circumstances point to you as having been the one who instigated the crime. And you must know, Mr. Douglass, that you are not an ordinary client, and I assure you that I have never in my long career had such a questionable defense to handle."

"And is that all that the police have found out about us?" I asked.

"That is all. Don't you think it is enough?"

"That is nothing," I said.

"Nothing!" exclaimed the lawyer.

"Nothing! Less than nothing in comparison to what is in reality my past, my adopted son's past and his wife's past."

Mr. Teck stared at me in astonishment.

"Come, don't be downcast," I said. "I believe

that my unhappy partner committed suicide, and as long as Teddy does not admit that he killed him I attach no importance to the tales the police get up."

The lawyer stared at me. Then he said, with compassion:

"After all, I am not very much surprised that you adopted a man like the accused."

I saw by his manner that he began to think that I was slightly crazed myself.

Time went slowly. The inquiry did not advance much. It was always the same hashed up story, warmed up for the public in different ways. The great question was, Was it a suicide or a murder? Then suddenly the affair took an unexpected turn.

One day my lawyer came into my cell and cried out joyfully:

"You are free! Free! You've got your liberty, and you can go!"

He was out of breath. He paused a moment, and then went on:

"Your son has cleared you. He has confessed all. He admits that he committed the crime, without an accomplice. He even admitted that he went to Holyoke intending to kill you, but had not the courage, and went to Mr. Kingsley instead. So you're free!"

He shook me warmly by the hand. I turned away my head to hide a tear that rolled down my scarred cheek, which had been burned by the vitriol.

"And so that is the way you take the good news I bring you?" said the lawyer. "I have some more news for you. Dr. Kingsley, the victim's son, who was once engaged to marry Mademoiselle Lucie Weil before you stole her away from him, is on his way here. He has sent a cable which reads: 'Do not hurry matters. I know all.'"

"What has he cabled? What is it you say?" I exclaimed.

"I know all," repeated the lawyer.

Then I fell back in my chair and shook with dry sobs. Instead of my going to the doctor, he was coming to me, perhaps to accuse me. "I know all." I should be ruined, my family would be dishonored and Evelyne——"

I must have looked haggard at the thought of it all, for in a far-off voice I heard Mr. Teck call to the jailer:

"Here, man, bring some brandy, or something! My client is as weak as a woman. He is fainting from joy, evidently."

CHAPTER XXVI

THE DOCTOR'S ARRIVAL

THE prison doors had closed behind me. I was free!

Of course, everyone sympathized with me. I was the victim of a judicial error, whom only the tardy confession of the murderer had saved from the clutches of the law, which is ever ready to admit its shortsightedness. John Fellows, the secretary who had caused all the harm, couldn't do enough to show me how sorry he was that he had brought such an injury upon me.

As soon as the doctor arrived I saw at once that I had not entirely lost the game. From his manner of greeting me at the docks I saw that I still held the highest trump card. His "I know all" meant very little after all. As he came off of the transatlantic liner and greeted me with a cool, "How d'ye do, Mr. Douglass," I saw without doubt that he did not know all. It was quite evi-

dent that he had not the same affection for me that he had in France, and of which he had given so many demonstrative proofs. He was very anxious, and seemed plunged in gloomy thoughts, but I could see that he still held a certain respect for me, for he said at once:

"You have not been as fair with me as you should have been. You have been anything but frank, and I feel hurt about it all. You have put a severe strain on the bonds that hold me to you, but blood is thicker than water, and I have no right to feel bitter against you."

I began to breathe freely again. The object of his visit to New York was not so dangerous after all.

I took it for granted that he would go to his old home. Now that Kingsley was dead, he was the owner of the princely abode.

"I am not going to stay there," he said, "I am only here for a short time, and will go to the hotel. I was never welcomed at home when a boy and I don't feel like going there now."

Consequently we repaired to the Waldorf.

"Now," he said, as we stood facing each other in his apartment, "tell me the whole truth."

We looked like two duelists who were on the

ground for the first time. He had an awkward manner in opening his assault, and I showed as much awkwardness in parrying.

While he unpacked his belongings and arranged his things, I gave him all the details as closely as possible of his ex-patient's crime, and of all that had befallen me.

He listened attentively to all I had to say. At certain passages, especially when I spoke of my innocence, I saw his lips curl; the slight sneer might pass for a mocking smile. At other times when I spoke of Lucie, his brows knit and his jaws set as though he were suffering some sharp pain. It was only when I spoke of Polydore that he appeared indifferent. When he had finished unpacking, he came and sat down opposite me. He took out his cigarette case and offered one to me. Then he began:

"You can tell any story you like about Z——, but I am here now, and I know him. The police do not know what I know. They do not know that Z——, to whom you gave the name of Theodore Douglass, is really Polydore Barrabas, the wretch who struck his own mother and then fled to my insane asylum. The police do not know that through your plotting and scheming I married the sister of

this wretch, and that I am living a miserable life with her."

My poor little daughter? I looked at my supposed son and said severely:

"You do wrong to say that, William. Evelyne is a sweet, good girl, and she loves you. I am ashamed of you."

"Evelyne is worthy of a better man than I," he replied softly. "You are right, she is everything a woman should be, but it is not my fault if my love is dead. I swear solemnly that I have tried loyally to forget Lucie, but cannot. Oh! why did you and Mr. Kingsley deceive me by telling me that she threw the vitriol at you and that she died afterward? Why did you both arrange to marry that wretch to her? By your being an accomplice of Mr. Kingsley you have killed every bit of filial love I had for you. Why did you plot together to frustrate my marriage?"

In the doctor's attitude, voice and look there was an earnestness which frightened me.

"I have come over to this country to save the woman I love," he said, looking me full in the face.

I got up and stood beside him. It took considerable effort to remain calm.

"You will not succeed," I said.

"I will succeed," he replied haughtily. "In this matter it will be war to the knife between us. All your efforts are bent on saving your adopted son; it is to your interest to implicate Lucie. But I am going to denounce Z—— on the authority of an alienist, and on the confession of his own sister, Evelyne."

Beside myself with fear, I sprang at him. For one moment I grappled with him, crying out furiously:

"You shall not do that! You shall not betray Evelyne's secret; that at least shall be kept sacred! I forbid you to betray her secret!"

The doctor wrenched himself free. He drew back a step, still keeping his eyes fixed on my face. Then he said slowly:

"You have known Evelyne's secret all along."

This was a straight thrust. I remained silent.

"There are moments when I wonder if you really are Douglass; if you are my father. There are moments like this, for instance, when everything tends to make me believe that you cannot be my father, that you are——"

My throat swelled. For a moment I felt suffocated.

He stopped. His eyes left my face. He frowned, bit his lips and looked down at the floor.

Then he said:

"I ought not to have spoken so. I don't know why I said that; there was no reason whatever for it. Forgive me, father."

He held out his hand to me.

CHAPTER XXVII

POLYDORE IS RESIGNED

IT is eighteen months after the tragedy at Bry-sur-Marne, and I am again trying to solve the same problem. The situation repeats itself.

The question was then and is now: "How can I save my son's life?"

I had come back to the starting point.

I had schemed in vain. The most unexpected happenings, the most propitious, the most unlucky, had all ended in a dead loss. I, in my New York office, bearing the name of Charles Douglass, was in the same position that the sculptor, Barrabas, had been in in his little cottage in France.

The situation repeated itself exactly. There was the same motive, the same personages—Polydore and Lucie. Only the scene was changed. I could not use the same subterfuges to save Teddy as I had used to save Polydore, for now he was accused of the crime and I could only trust to the shrewdness of Mr. Teck, who was acting with my son's

advocate, and who sought by every means in his power to save my boy from the electric chair.

On their side, the doctor and the lawyer for Lucie exerted every zealous effort to save her. When all was said and done, it was the fortune of the very murdered man that was being used to save his assassins the penalty of their crime. It seemed terrible to use poor Kingsley's money in this way.

I no longer had the energy which up till now had helped me to scheme and plot and had carried me through all dangers. And now that my benefactor was gone, I seemed like a boat without a rudder. In killing my partner, Polydore had removed the directing mind of our destinies; he had cut off the hand that held the strings.

One morning I went with Mr. Teck to visit my son in prison. I expected to find him crushed by remorse over his horrible crime; I expected to find him in the same state as he had been when in the asylum at Saint Mande. Instead of that, I found him smiling, quite at his ease. He was pleased to see me and held out both hands in welcome.

"You have only a quarter of an hour to talk," said the lawyer. "I'll come back for you then."

"Mon pere," said Polydore. "I am so happy to

see you, although it is for the last time. We must not waste the few minutes that is given to us talking useless chatter. Sit down and I will do the talking. I know from my lawyer what efforts you and William Kingsley are making to save Lucie and me. You are both foolish."

"Why foolish, mon fils?"

"Because you are spending great sums of money for nothing. If you had given me all this money you are spending now when I went to see you at Holyoke, all this would never have happened. But it is no use now regretting the past. What is done is done, and neither you nor can I alter circumstances. They let me smoke here. Will you have a cigarette? These are very good."

I was stupefied at his nerve.

"I must save you at any price, Polydore," I said.

"My father, you are wasting time," he said simply.

After he had lighted his cigarette he said calmly:

"There is only one person who can save Lucie; it is I. Thank God, William Kingsley cannot do that for her! But I can. It rests entirely with me. I have declared to the judge and shall renew my

declaration before the jury that Lucie is innocent of any crime; that she did not provoke the cause, and that I acted entirely alone."

"Polydore," I said, "I am going to save you in spite of yourself. Your lawyer will plead madness, and that you were not responsible for your actions. Your former life cannot fail to impress the jury."

"My former life," he said, in a bitter tone; "it is precisely on account of my former life that I want this finished. And it is because I do not wish to incur again the same penalties that I am in haste to free you from the vow you made before the statue of 'Life,' when the hammer struck my poor mother."

He got up and walked quietly up and down his cell.

"Well," he said, in a calm voice, and without apparent emotion, "you do not understand that it is better that I should die—that I must die! What have I to live for now? Lucie has given me the only happiness I have had in life. I have reached the climax of a great love. For a short time I have been the happiest of men. I have nothing more to hope for from life or love, for Lucie is both to me. If I were sent back to the madhouse I should never

see her again. Now is the time for me to die. It must be so."

He stood before me, calm and smiling.

"Perhaps you are right, my son," I said brokenly. "Adieu! Adieu!"

I could say no more, and left my boy to his fate.

CHAPTER XXVIII

LUCIE ASTONISHES EVERYBODY

"YOU must admit," said William to me as we left the courthouse together, "that I showed exceptional discretion in the testimony I made before the jury. I did not want to charge the accused for two reasons. The first is that this abnormal individual is my wife's brother, and that in disclosing his identity I should bring a cloud over my wife and my two children. You see, I have thought the matter over, and I think it is better for the honor of all that this wretch pays the penalty of his crimes under the name he now goes by."

"And the other reason?" I asked.

"A question of sentiment. It was simply gratitude. Z—— was marvellous as he stood before the judge and exonerated Lucie in the manner he did. It is clear that Lucie owes her acquittal entirely to him. I was so grateful to him, and, after all, he is her husband. Poor devil! He loves her

almost as much as I do. How I could have deceived myself by imagining that my love for her had passed I cannot now understand. How could I have submitted to the strange influence that was at work to prevent me from marrying her? Now, of course, I know that I was the victim of a coercion. I thought that I did not love her, and I believed in all faith that I loved Evelyne."

I remained silent. I was afraid to show my tenderness for Evelyne, just as I was afraid to show the grief and despair I felt on Polydore's account. I knew that if I did let him see my great anxieties the doubt that had half arisen in his mind when he had said to me, "There are moments when I wonder if you really are Douglass," would arise again.

Since that day he had never shown any suspicion, and although he did not give me the same affection that he had shown in France, he at least showed me the respect that was due to his father.

As the days passed and the end of the trial drew near, the fear I felt took another form. I knew that I could not save Polydore. He was doomed! I was forced to bow to the inevitable. Polydore would be condemned to death. My son would be electrocuted. I seemed to live in a never-ending

nightmare, and then, as the last day of the trial drew near, other anxieties beset me. Evelyne's future engrossed my mind so completely that the inevitable fate of Polydore became secondary. I knew now how the doctor felt as regards Lucie, and I feared the worst would happen.

Addison Kingsley had been a true prophet; he had not been deceived. He had paid with his life for his cruel vengeance, and now, after his death, his vengeance was working itself out.

Alas! I could not foresee the dreadful end of it all.

The doctor did not try to hide his intentions from me, the man he thought was his father.

"You know, Charles, I shall not return to France. I shall make arrangements to settle a large income on my wife through Lawyer Marcadian. I am ready to make all the sacrifices that are required to obtain a divorce, so that I can eventually marry Lucie."

Hiding my emotion, I said coldly:

"And your duty—doesn't that count for something, William? What about your children?"

"I shall make ample provision for them."

At his cold, heartless words I seemed to hear again Polydore's voice when he spoke to me of

Lucie. What sorcery did this woman exercise over the minds of men!

What subterfuge could I use to defend the rights of my daughter? What means could I employ to separate that woman from the doctor. I thought with bitterness of the tragi-comedy that had been played in the pavilion at Neuilly. But now the clever stage manager was no longer here to give me his advice. What could I do?

"I shall be very happy with Lucie as my wife, and I shall stay over here and be with you, Charles," said the doctor ingenuously.

What could I do? I could not foresee that it would be Lucie herself who would be the one to arrange matters.

It was the last day of the trial. I had followed the hearing with attention, but I felt that I had not the courage to be present when the verdict was given. I could not listen to the judge demanding my son's life without breaking down. I decided to stay at my office. I refused to accompany William, whose feverish impatience to see Lucie acquitted contrasted singularly with my gloomy despondency and my resignation to the inevitable. Not for anything in the world would William have missed that last session of court!

It had been arranged that Mr. Teck should call me on the phone and tell me as soon as sentence had been passed.

It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon when he called me up. He told me that after the prosecutor had made a vehement and pitiless address to the court the jury had adjourned to deliberate. From five to five-forty-five o'clock I sat huddled up in my chair, crushed, broken down, with eyes fixed on my desk, passing through the most agonizing moments of my life. During forty-five minutes I sat there, with dazed senses and dry eyes, to endure the silent anguish of that terrible waiting.

I had given orders to John Fellows, who was now my secretary, not to come into my office upon any pretext whatever. I wanted to be alone. And the forty-five minutes that the jury took to declare him guilty, without extenuating circumstances, appeared to me like eternity.

A second call came from the lawyer. I grasped the receiver. I heard his curt, dry voice:

"He is condemned to death, and madame is acquitted."

I dropped the receiver and fell forward on my desk. How long I was unconscious I do not know. I could not tell. I came to my senses as my secre-

tary came noisily into the room in spite of the orders that I had given him. I sat up in affright. Behind John Fellows, hustling each other, their clothing in disorder, faces angry and eyes wild, came the doctor, Lucie and the Hindoo Jim.

The scene was so disorderly and unexpected, so full of menace, that I seized my revolver and levelled it in the direction of the group in an instinctive movement of self-defense.

John Fellows put his hand on my arm.

"Be calm, Mr. Douglass; be calm."

I looked at them all.

The doctor stood before me trembling with impotent rage, with bloody face, his eyes starting from their sockets, his upper lip split, the cartilage of the nose bruised and one ear torn.

Beside him was Lucie, as pale as death, with frightened eyes, her hair all ruffled, her big blue hat with its sweeping aigrette held in her hand, gesticulating like a jack in the box, without being able to utter a word. Behind was Jim, with his great fist covered with blood. He was the only one who showed calmness.

"Moussir," he cried, in a harsh, angry voice, "I have brought Madame to you. I ask you to protect her from Doctor Kingsley."

It was funny for me to be asked to protect anyone from William, he was in such a pitiful plight and in no state to defend himself. Lucie's shrill treble voice soon made itself heard.

"I have had enough of the Kingsley family," she said, "and I intend to be my own mistress and do what I like in the future, rather than give up my liberty now I have it. I prefer to renounce all claim to the fortune, which has only brought me imprisonment and notoriety."

"Who wants you to give up your liberty, Lucie?" I asked her.

"Why, Doctor Kingsley. He wants me to marry him, now that he knows I shall soon be a widow. When I left the court he tried to take me away by force. He says he is going to ask his wife to give him his freedom. I never heard of such a disgraceful thing, and he thinks I would have him then. I'd rather be without a cent; I would rather marry Jim and go away from here with him. He has proved himself through all my trouble to be a loyal friend and better suited to my station. I should not be where I am now if I had not been tempted by the magnificent promises of Addison Kingsley."

She looked at us all with flashing, angry eyes.

"I know now that money is not everything," she said.

The Bengalese looked menacingly at William. Then he turned to me and said:

"Doctor Kingsley will never marry her. She loves me. I had a fight with him outside the court. I will fight him again if he wants, anywhere. I will kill him if he tries to take Lucie away with him. She does not want to go. Say it, Lucie. Repeat to Mr. Douglass that you are going to marry me."

I turned to her.

"You intend seriously to give up all claim to the money?" I asked.

"Yes, I am sick of it all. I only want to be left alone. Besides, I love Jim."

"You promise me to leave New York if I give you some money and later you will marry Jim? He is, I know, honest and true."

"I promise," she said.

She and the Hindoo talked aside for a moment, the man's face beaming with joy. Then she went out of the room with him without deigning to give the doctor a look or a word of farewell.

William and I stood face to face. He was in a dreadful condition from his fight with Lucie's pro-

tector. His lips swollen by the pummelling he had received, moved as he uttered thickly:

"It was you—you—who arranged this."

"I? Why, you must be mad!"

He gave a laugh which frightened me. Then he swung round and left me without another word.

CHAPTER XXIX.

2B+2R+2S+D+G+L=X

HOW easy it is for a writer to draw in opposition to the dramatic side of his adventures the burlesque attitude of certain characters!

It is evident that, in spite of the seriousness of the situation, the entrance of poor Jim on the scene—Jim, whom everyone had forgotten, who had fallen from the clouds as it were—has something that is grotesque in it. But I have no desire to joke, now that I have arrived at this part of my narrative. If I were able to make the scene more realistic I should brush the picture full of horror—the horror of an execution.

I cannot go into the details of the torment that was inflicted on my son Polydore. Only to think of it to-day makes me turn cold with horror. He was electrocuted within a short time after he was condemned. He was seated in the fatal chair, perfectly calm, so his lawyer, who was present, told me. Without manifesting any fear, he let them place the

casque on his head which conducted a current sufficient to kill ten persons. But due either to the inability of the executioner or to a fault in the electrodes, as has happened already in several executions, Polydore did not die for seventeen minutes, after the agonizing tortures of five successive charges.

I passed the entire night before my son's death locked in my office, working. This was the only way I could wave aside the terrible thought of Polydore's death. My secretary came in early in the morning. He could not hide his astonishment when he saw me.

"You have aged ten years in one night, Mr. Douglass!" he cried. "Look at yourself in the mirror! Just look at your hair! It is white at the temples!"

My secretary's words annoyed me.

"Let us get to work at once," I said. "We have a lot to do to get all in good order for the directors' meeting. We have only two days before us, and the work must be sufficiently advanced so that I can hand over to Doctor William Kingsley a clear, net statement."

For some time this general liquidation of the business had been going on with a view to estab-

lishing for William Kingsley the share which had come to him through his supposed father's death.

The heir to the paper trust showed no interest at all in his succession. He seemed completely detached from his own interests. I saw him every day at the Waldorf, and every day I saw more clearly that my presence annoyed him, but he appeared, by a strange contradiction, to seek this annoyance and to gloat over it.

We never spoke of Lucie or Polydore. We were careful on both sides not to revive uselessly our personal sorrows. It had been understood that he would return to France as soon as the business was settled. He did not show any haste to go. He had not the mania for work that I had. It would have been better for him if he had. He was for most of the time silent and moody.

It was obvious that Lucie's preference for the Hindoo had been a terrible blow to him. He did not appear to be making any plans for the future. Nevertheless, to one who was observant it was clear that some fixed idea haunted him. No matter what I spoke to him about, he was always absent-minded. Some great preoccupation seemed to have taken possession of his mind. When I told him of my desire to return to France with him, and of my in-

tention to retire from business, to live near him, he did not protest, neither did he show any satisfaction, although only a short time back he had expressed a similar wish.

As the day for final settlement of the business approached and the time was at hand for us to start for Europe the doctor became more and more uneasy. He seldom came to the office now. All our affairs were about straightened out. Everything seemed satisfactory. The capital had greatly increased since the firm had gone under the name of Kingsley & Douglass. There were now only the formalities to follow—merely the consent of the two parties interested—William Kingsley and I.

A meeting had been called that afternoon. All were waiting for the deceased partner's son to affix his signature to the various papers, when, instead of William, it was Mr. Teck, the lawyer, who came.

"And Doctor Kingsley?" I asked.

"Doctor William Kingsley will not be here, gentlemen," said the lawyer, addressing the directors.

"Is anything the matter?" I asked. "Is he sick?"

"No, he sailed this morning at eleven o'clock for France."

"What do you mean?" I said, in amazement. "We have both booked our passage for to-morrow."

"He changed his mind and thought he would go to-day; that is all," said the lawyer coolly. "Besides, this is a secondary matter.

"Gentlemen," he continued, "I am empowered to act for Doctor Kingsley. Here is my power of attorney in due form."

The company approved, bowed assent, and the formalities were completed without any difficulty arising on either side.

I wanted to get it over and be alone with the lawyer. I felt vaguely that his power was not limited solely to signing the numerous papers that were being examined. Mr. Teck had surely something else to say to me. He also seemed to want to hurry things along.

His manner suddenly changed as soon as the last man had left us.

"Mr. Douglass," he said, "you can send your secretary away. It is better that we should be alone."

"He cannot hear us. However, if you wish it so, very well.

"Now!" I said.

He sat down and carefully arranged the fold of his trousers. He looked for a moment at his shoes; then he said gravely:

"I am charged with a very delicate mission. I

have been your counsel in the recent trouble, and you know in what high esteem I hold you, Mr. Douglass, but it is not my fault if at present I am Doctor Kingsley's lawyer."

"Would your esteem for me be lessened on that account?" I said, forcing a smile.

"Not at all. Quite the contrary. And knowing the esteem I have for you, I should like you to feel that what I have to say is for your own interest. I should like you to listen carefully to my advice in the matter and follow it, for, as I say, it is for your own good."

"Go ahead! We shall see," I replied curtly.

"I advise you strongly not to leave the hospitable soil of America."

"And for what reasons may I ask?"

"I do not know exactly Doctor Kingsley's reasons. I am merely commissioned to give you his advice on the subject."

"The doctor advises me not to return to France!" I said, in astonishment.

"He forbids you to return. 'Forbid' is the exact word he used. He gave me to understand that you would smart for it if you have the rashness to ignore his wishes. Besides, he compensates you in such a marvellous manner that it is to your interest

to obey him. Pardon me if the word 'obey' seems an improper expression in this circumstance. Doctor William Kingsley leaves you the entire charge of the business. He requires that you remain the entire master of your interests and of his. You understand? This you must admit is an unquestionable mark of confidence."

"Which is not in accordance with his strange interdiction," I replied.

"That may be. But take notice of the way in which my wealthy client leaves you the use, one might say, of his own fortune. It is a compensation—how can I express it?—disproportionate. The only stipulation is that you will not go and amuse yourself in Paris. Consider, Mr. Kingsley is contented with a check for one hundred thousand dollars for his immediate wants. His indifference for money I consider almost like an aberration. To cut the matter short, will you follow my advice and remain quietly here and look after the business?"

"I might take your advice if you would give me at least one reason for this injunction on the part of your eccentric client," I said, smiling.

"I have but one," said the lawyer. "Personally, I do not understand it at all. You may be able to make it out better than I."

He drew out of the inside pocket of his coat an unsealed envelope. He took out a paper folded in fours.

"This is what my client told me to give to you," he said, "in case there was any discussion in the matter. It looks to me like a riddle that one might see in a magazine. I am not good at guessing those tricks. See if you are sharper than I."

I unfolded the paper. For a moment I had the desire to laugh. Then I looked at it in amazement. It looked like the work of a crazy person.

At the top of the page the doctor had written the title which I have given to my story:

"THE MAN WITHOUT A FACE"

Which the alienist had made. I was speechless

as I gazed at the sketch. This face without a mouth, without a nose, without lineament, where the eyes only, behind the spectacles, seemed to send back my own scared look.

At the bottom of the page I deciphered this obscure algebraical formula:

$$2B+2R+2S+D+G+1—X.$$

"Mon Dieu!" I cried, in affright. "Mon Dieu, Mr. Teck, what does all this signify? Is this a joke or is it the work of a crazy person?"

"I don't think so," replied the lawyer. "I imagine that it is a problem, and you are the only one who can solve it. I am no good at mathematics, but all the same I know what an equation is. In this little problem, which in appearance is very complicated, or very simple, as you like, there is a certain figure which will enlighten you."

"Yes, yes!" I stammered. "The X must be the enigmatical figure!"

"Although having no resemblance, it is easy enough to see that it is intended to be a sketch of your face, which has been burned with the vitriol."

"Why, what do you mean?" I exclaimed.

"That is my opinion, and I give it for what it is worth. As to the formula, it's like Greek to me."

Puzzled at the first term of the equation, I searched beneath these letters to see if I could make out what the doctor wished to convey to me.

I found nothing.

Then, all of a sudden, by reading the same line over and over again, beginning the line with his sign and speaking aloud. "2B," the repetition of the "B" in Barrabas flashed across my eyes. "2B"!

A moment's reflection showed me that in this formula the doctor had only used consonants. I took my pen and quickly wrote on a pad my two names and replaced the vowels with periods.

I obtained this result, which was hieroglyphical enough:

D..GL.S.B.RR.B.S.

I then added the similar consonants and found suddenly the original equation:

2B+2R+2S+D+G+1—X.

A cold perspiration broke out on my forehead. I was not so ignorant as Mr. Teck. I knew what the X meant. My mind directed my pencil to pass from one sign to the other, to figure out some of the terms of the equation. I eliminated the X, and, returning to my first attempt, crossed the first five

letters in the second part of the equation, which was obviously easy to solve. Then I was able to transcribe:

+B.RR.B.S=—D..GL.S.

In other words, Barrabas, positive, was equal to the negative, Douglass.

"Have you solved the problem?" asked Mr. Teck amiably.

I folded the paper and put it away in the drawer of my desk. Then, after a short silence, I said quietly:

"I shall follow your advice, Mr. Teck. It is quite probable that Doctor Kingsley is right. I shall stay here in America and look after the business for him. Evidently that will be better than returning to France just at present and so risk losing both our fortunes."

Without understanding the meaning of my words, Mr. Teck got up and shook hands with me cordially, saying:

"I knew very well that a man like you, worth millions, would do nothing rash."

So the doctor was the only one in the world who had suspected my identity. It was no longer doubts that he had; it was a formal accusation inclosed in the mysterious paper which the lawyer had brought

me. In this command there was a hidden warning which I understood clearly.

After Evelyne's compromising confession the doctor had put two and two together and discovered that I was not his father but his wife's own father. Through his lawyer he had given me to understand that he did not wish me to come between Evelyne and him. Evidently, from his manner of leaving me the entire management of his personal fortune, he had no intention of divulging the secret he had guessed. To enter into a feud with him at this moment would be to destroy Evelyne's happiness forever. To go and confess all the truth would be to uselessly disarm myself for the future. I had no alternative.

All through the adventures Polydore had been the one to think of, and now that he had paid the penalty of his crime there was nothing for me to do but to obey my son-in-law's order, and perhaps eventually Evelyne's happiness would be worked out, for there were still little Pierre and Suzanne.

Yes, a thousand times the doctor was right! I had fled so as to shroud Polydore's crime in mystery and so save the honor of my name. I should have to keep my vow to the end. I must always re-

main Charles Douglass, for Barrabas, the sculptor, did not exist.

I should never be Barrabas again! I should never go back to my beloved studio, to my little cottage, again. The doctor knew all!

I laid my arms on my desk and let my head fall upon them, and then I broke down completely.

CHAPTER XXX

THE BUNCH OF VIOLETS

FOR two years I followed Mr. Teck's advice and attended to business. I was Charles Douglass, and never once did my mask drop aside. Little by little I began to look upon my old self as another man, as some one whom I had known. I was no longer separated from my native soil by the width of the ocean. A great gap was dug between me and the European life, which I thought I should never be able to bridge over.

During these two years I received from Doctor Kingsley the curtest letters, which came at fixed dates and always upon business matters—the letters of a client to his banker. No allusion was ever made to the past or to the future. From time to time I was informed by Marcadian, with whom I had taken good care not to break off all relations, of how things were in Paris. He spoke of Evelyne only incidentally; his letters were always about the doctor's misanthropy, which since his return from

America had been marked. But he assured me that Evelyne was well—always incidentally.

Marcadian only went by outside appearances. In his optimistic correspondence he showed himself naïvely happy with the fortune and the position in society which his niece now held. He spoke with a sort of personal pride of the magnificent house which the doctor had built in the Bois de Boulogne and on the fashionable life that Evelyne could lead now. What was all that wealth if she was not happy? I wondered where the woman was who had been the cause of her unhappiness. I had not heard anything of her for two years.

In the month of December I was called away to Montreal on an important business deal, and it was there that I met her again.

In Montreal there is a Rue Richelieu, a Rue Saint Denis and, better still, there is the French language. At the hotel where I put up I heard the Normandy tongue, the drawling accent which went to my heart. I was delighted. It was like a light breeze which was borne to me from home.

In the evening I walked through the streets of the town, and I soon found myself in the English quarter. I was strolling up Macdougal street, when my attention was attracted by a brightly illuminated

entrance. It was a cheap music hall. The brilliant sign and posters announced the wonders of the French boui-boui and the extraordinary English and American exhibits that would be seen at the evening performance. I went in and took a seat in the orchestra.

The show had all the desultory style of the usual music hall. First came some girls—pretty, made-up dolls—then the usual "most-wonderful-acrobat-the-world-had-ever-seen." Then came the Parisian singer. Her foolish repertoire, at this distance from Paris, seemed to me to be almost witty. Then I suddenly sat upright in my seat. Was I dreaming? I rubbed my eyes, for there on the stage before me stood Jim. I did not look at the performance. I did not try to make out the Hindoo's tricks. My eyes were riveted on the little door in the center of the stage, which was being swayed gently backward and forward by the draft from the outside passages.

I waited.

The opera glasses trembled in my fingers as I lifted them quickly to my eyes. The little door opened and Lucie came on to the stage.

Was this Lucie—this vaudeville actress in the hideous make-up who advanced toward the foot-

lights and whom the audience applauded as though she were a favorite star?

Yes, it was Lucie.

I recognized her only by her large, dark eyes, with their long, fringed lashes. What a change from the lovely girl who had been the cause of all our sorrow!

Aged, thin, her beauty faded, she was no longer the beauty whom Polydore had married. It was her ghost who appeared before me in the tawdry spangled gown. The low cut of her waist showed me a bare, thin neck. The electric light threw its pitiless rays on her face ravaged by a passion for drink. I could not mistake the dreadful stigma. There was nothing left that reminded me of Lucie, but the eyes still kept their charm and seemed to give an intense life to her face, which looked like the face of a corpse.

I lowered my glasses. Their act went on. I felt that I could not look at the wretched show. The Bengalese made the people laugh, and Lucie sang, and sang well. Poor Lucie! I felt a great pity for her, and as the public applauded the final scene I stood up from my chair and snatched from my buttonhole the small bunch of violets that a little flower girl had pinned on my coat at the en-

trance door. I threw them on the stage. The tiny bunch of flowers dropped at the singer's feet.

Lucie and Jim, with the same movement, turned to bow to the one who had thrown them. I was standing up in the third row of the orchestra. My eyes were fixed on the stage. Lucie gave me one startled look. Then, without even bowing to the applause of the audience, she turned quickly and left the stage.

The servant of the hotel, whom I sent early the next morning to make inquiries about the vaudeville singer, had some trouble in bringing Jim back with him. The erstwhile servant was as startled as Lucie. They were frightened to see me in Montreal, and wondered what I wanted. At first Jim refused to accompany the messenger, but with the gift of some money and the assurance that I wished him no harm he decided to come and see me.

I greeted him in a cordial manner which soon put him at his ease. I was just taking my breakfast of buttered rolls and tea. I offered him a cup, which he refused. He preferred a glass of old rum, which he swallowed at a gulp.

"Now, Jim," I said, "tell me how it is I find you on a music hall stage in Montreal."

"You might have met us last year in Pittsburg, where we were married; then in Colorado, where we stayed for six months. One must live. The money that you gave us did not last long with Lucie. When it was all gone we had to do something, and so we thought we would do a vaudeville act. Lucie sings well and she can dance, and I can do a few vaudeville stunts."

"She is terribly changed," I said.

At my remark his face suddenly became overcast. He put his empty glass on the table and turned his somber eyes on me.

"She is doomed," he said sadly.

He coughed, trying to imitate Lucie's cough, to make me understand that she was suffering from tuberculosis. He shook his head hopelessly, then added:

"Yesterday, after the performance, she had an attack. She was frightened at seeing you. She had hemorrhages all night."

"Have you seen a doctor?" I asked.

"Yes. He says she will never leave Montreal."

"Has she coughed for long?"

"It commenced in San Francisco. We hadn't a dollar left. She is too fond of drink," he said gloomily.

And he held out his glass to me again, with a trembling hand, to prove to me that he did not fear the alcohol, although it was bad for his wife.

In his mournful voice the Hindoo continued:

"I have been very happy with my wife——"

I interrupted him.

"Who is the doctor who has attended her?"

"Doctor Brown, on Wellington street."

"Very good; I'll see him, Jim."

I gave him a roll of bills and told him he could go.

He turned round at the door.

"She was so pleased to have the violets," he said. "She told me to thank you."

A quarter of an hour later Doctor Brown was at the hotel.

"Mr. Douglass?" he said, bowing ceremoniously.

"I sent for you, doctor, to ask about a patient of yours. You are attending a young person in whom I am interested—a singer at the Grosvenor concert."

"Oh, you mean the Hindoo's wife—a tubercular victim, and alcoholic in the bargain. I have seen her this morning."

"Do you think that the end is near? I am returning to New York in eight days."

"In eight days!" repeated Dr. Brown. "If you

are interested in the little singer at the Grosvenor, you will not have to postpone your return. It is the end. I have forbidden her to go on the stage again. It is only a question of a few hours. Is that all you wish to know, sir?"

"That is all. What is your fee, doctor?"

He named a sum that amazed me. He knew that I was Douglass, the millionaire. He pocketed the sum and went out of the room, smiling complacently.

When I was left alone I felt very thoughtful. Here in Montreal there was more besides the local color, the French streets, the Normandy accent that evoked in my mind memories of my past life. In a squalid room the girl who had, unconsciously, perhaps, wrecked my son's life, as well as my son-in-law's, was dying. Even if I must pass for the most heartless of men, the thought of Lucie's death filled me with a great peace. It seemed to me like a ray of sunshine after a storm. I could not say what I hoped for from this event, but I had a presentiment that some great change was coming.

It was the fourth day after my visit to the music hall that poor Jim came and told me that she was dead. Doctor Brown, who hoped to get another fee, came with him.

"When she died she had your faded bunch of violets in her hand," said the heart-broken Bengalese.

Now, what demon—yes, what demon, for there is no other word—made me rush to the telegraph office and send the following message:

Dr. William Kingsley, Paris:

Lucie died at Montreal to-day, December 27.

CHARLES DOUGLASS.

CHAPTER XXXI

I RETURN TO FRANCE

I DECIDED at all costs that I would take a trip to Paris. My decision was irrevocable. Neither the arguments of Mr. Teck nor the absurd fears of my secretary, John Fellows, could make me alter my mind.

"You are rash to do so," said the lawyer. "You are risking your present high position. Doctor Kingsley only asks you to stay here quietly as you have been doing for the last two years."

"It is all right, Mr. Teck," I said. "Things have changed, and I am going over to square matters with Doctor Kingsley."

No arguments could persuade me, now that my resolution was taken. I had a feverish desire to see the doctor and to confirm verbally what I had informed him in the cable message I had sent from Montreal, and, above all, I wanted to see Evelyne.

I did not make any exact plans for the future. Everything would depend upon how the doctor re-

ceived me. I might have to work it so as to force him to believe that I was Douglass, or I might have to admit to him that his surmises had been correct.

For Evelyne's sake I might be able to throw away my mask altogether and become Barrabas, the sculptor, again. It might happen one way or the other. It would depend entirely upon circumstances. I had given up prophesying. Since I had lived in America I had become too practical for that sort of thing.

The preparations for my journey were soon made, and I sailed for France with the sole object of making a pleasure trip as any prosperous business man might do.

By a simple matter of chance I sailed on the Touraine, the same boat on which I had come across with my partner, Lucie Weil and my son Polydore. As a whim, I occupied the same stateroom I had before.

As soon as I was on the boat my mind reverted to my previous trip.

I saw again the scene on that starry night in mid-ocean. I saw Polydore standing beside Lucie, who I thought had been murdered by Kingsley. Then I saw the millionaire and heard his loud voice rising above the noise of the billows.

Then I heard my son's rough voice as he drew aside the curtain in my stateroom:

"Give me five louis!"

They were of the past! I was the only survivor of the four passengers who had taken the other voyage!

We had only a short while raised anchor when the captain of the boat came up to me and said:

"Are you Mr. Douglass of the firm of Kingsley & Douglass?"

"The same," I replied.

"This is very embarrassing," he said. "Here is a message for you to go back. I am directed to stop the boat, but it is impossible for me to put you ashore."

The captain held out a paper ribbon, on which I read these words:

"Return. Cable message from France. TECK."

"Can you not get a copy of this cable message?" I asked.

The captain looked annoyed.

Five minutes after, he brought me another ribbon, on which I read:

"Cable message from Paris worded, 'William is —a. (Signed) Marcadian.'"

"Excuse me," I said to the captain, "what does this mean?"

He bent over the little slip.

"It is annoying, but the apparatus has not registered the word," said the captain.

I was vexed beyond all measure. There was no sense whatever to the message. All day long I puzzled over the bit of paper. What letters were missing before and after the "a"? It was evidently the reply to my cable message telling him of Lucie's death. On this there was no doubt. But why had Marcadian replied for him? The brevity of the message puzzled me. His laconism doubled the interest.

My eyes were hypnotized on this vowel "a", the only letter that the imperfect apparatus had registered of the word that held the clew to the message. I thought of all the words that it might be that contained the letter "a".

Then suddenly I received a shock. Marcadian had sent the cable message. William had not replied. I had made out the missing word!

"William is de-a-d!"

There could not be any other translation. That explained Marcadian's signature and the brevity of his form. "William is dead!" The wireless,

through its imperfections, had softened the brusqueness of the lawyer's message. I placed the paper in my pocketbook and strolled up and down the deck to breathe in the fresh sea air. Dead! So the doctor was dead! It was the end of the nightmare in which I had lived for three years. I might be able to confess all to Marcadian and Evelyne now. Terrible as it may sound, I had a feeling of infinite relief at the thought that, after all, I should not have to face the doctor.

I recalled John Fellows' words as we stood together on the docks:

"I have a presentiment that you will not come back, Mr. Douglass."

And I had laughed and told him that he should step into my shoes.

In all probability he had telegraphed to Marcadian that I was crossing on the Touraine. If so, it was more than likely that on leaving the steamer at Havre I should find him there to meet me.

It was as I expected.

After a six-day passage, which seemed interminable, Marcadian welcomed me back to France. It was then that I found that I had made a mistake in the interpretation of the message. After all, I had not been at all sharp.

William was not dead.

Doctor Kingsley, the alienist, was a raving lunatic. The cable message had been "William is mad!"

Marcadian had aged greatly in three years. He seemed to me depressed; his shoulders were bent, his manner hesitating. The lines had deepened on his forehead and around the corners of the eyes. His speech had lost its dry and curt exactness. His eyes no longer had the shrewd, bright look of old. I saw from his obsequious manner how much he thought of the providential American who three years ago had helped his guilty nephew to escape.

"Ah! Mr. Douglass," he cried. "What pleasure to see you again! You will enter a house where desolation reigns. You received my cable message? It was your unfortunate message from Montreal which caused all the harm. Why did you cable that Lucie was dead? You gave him the last shock. He has entirely lost his reason, and the physicians say he will never regain it."

"What is the matter with William?" I asked.

"He is madder than any one of the patients he has had under his care in the asylum at Saint Mande. For a long time we have feared it was coming on. Let us hurry, or we shall miss the train.

We will have dinner en route. A table is reserved for us in the dining car."

I followed him, annoyed, disappointed. The natural solution that I had found to the message was wrong. My mistake was stupid.

The night was falling as we entered the railway station. We took our seats in the dining car, and Marcadian and I sat face to face at the little walnut table, with its shaded pink lights.

"Voyons, Maitre Marcadian; tell me all about it," I said.

He settled himself ready for his dinner and then began:

"I must go back to the time when you left Europe, three years ago, and tell you what I think you already know—that Z——, the idiot, was my nephew, and that it was Evelyne's brother who killed Mr. Kingsley."

"When William came over to America he told me of this strange coincidence," I replied.

"It is more than a strange coincidence," said Marcadian; "there was the finger of Providence in it."

"The finger!" I repeated, with sarcasm. "Say more likely the entire five fingers of Providence."

"The five fingers!"

"Yes, the entire hand of Millionaire Kingsley, who had brought about Z——'s marriage with Lucie Weil after having arranged that he should become Theodore Douglass, my adopted son. But never mind about Teddy or Kingsley. Tell me more about the doctor."

"Mr. Douglass, if you had listened to me when I said to you, before the marriage, that there was a serious reason why my niece could not marry Doctor Kingsley all this would never have happened. But I also was to blame. I was the lawyer in charge of Doctor Kingsley's affairs, and I ought to have attended to business only and have occupied myself simply with the case of the little milliner and have got her out of that house in Neuilly, where she was locked up, and made things smooth for him to have married her, instead of trying to make a match between him and my niece. She was a beautiful girl, and I ought to have known that the doctor would not get over a passion for her so quickly, and I ought to have foreseen what might happen. I have made a great mistake. I was guided by what I thought to be Evelyne's interest. My brother-in-law, the sculptor Barrabas—you remember the affair, Mr. Douglass?"

"As though it were yesterday."

"Well, Barrabas left me a great responsibility, and I did all in my power to promote, as I thought, Evelyne's happiness and to find her a secure position in society, which could only be obtained through a brilliant marriage, but everything has been against us."

"Are you not exaggerating?" I said as I filled up his wine glass. "Do you not think, on the contrary, that fate has served you as if the events of the last few years have been really directed by a skillful hand?"

"Mr. Kingsley's hand, I suppose you mean."

"His hand, or another's. Your nephew Polydore has paid the penalty of his crime, but he paid it under my name. That saves the honor of your family. Thanks to me, Madame Lucie has not deprived the doctor of a part of his fortune. Then your niece has two beautiful children. Is that not a great joy for her in her affliction? If she has not the happiness of a wife, she has the joys of a mother. Tell me some details of the doctor's illness."

"What details can I give you? You can go and see him. He is in the asylum at Saint Mande."

"At his own place!" I cried.

"In his own clinic, which two years ago was

taken over by one of his colleagues. He was a friend of William's. He is in cell Number Thirteen. Do you remember?"

"In cell Number Thirteen!" I cried. "In the same cell as Z——!"

"In the very same cell where you first met Z——, my nephew Polydore, whom the doctor took into his asylum out of charity. All day long the poor fellow sings light airs from the cafe concert. He knows no one, neither his wife nor his children. So, to amuse him, they have given him some speaking dolls, like one buys at the bazars for little girls. He passes his time in dressing them in faded silks and satins. It is pitiful to see how he looks after them. He arranges their finery with the hand of a careful mother and attends to them so lovingly. But it is always Lucie, and only Lucie whom he sees, whom he mentions, in his incoherent talk. Since your telegram came his case has been declared hopeless. He has not a ray of intelligence."

"Does he ever speak of his father?"

Marcadian remained a minute without replying. His eyes were on his plate. Then he raised his head and looked me full in the face.

"Is it of Addison Kingsley or yourself of whom you speak? In his crazy talk he often confuses

Lucie Weil and his own mother, but when he speaks of you it is with imprecations which have no head or tail. Then his madness becomes terrible. He mixes all the events of the last three years in his poor, troubled brain. He curses Evelyne, he curses Polydore, he curses me, he curses all the Barrabas family. He confuses everybody in his maledictions. He confuses you with my brother-in-law, the sculptor, his wife's own father. And then he thinks Barrabas knew his mother, and he talks of Mr. Kingsley's vengeance. He is mad, raving mad!"

The train rushed onward at express speed in the darkness of the night. Great shadowy forms seemed to pass quickly before our carriage window —strange, weird shapes. I no longer heard Marcadian's voice. I no longer thought of him. I did not think of the poor doctor. I was thinking of Kingsley, the millionaire.

Ah, poor, revengeful friend! He made no error in his daring calculations. He chose well when he chose lovely Lucie Weil to work out his cruel vengeance. The vengeance came with a slow but a sure step!

CHAPTER XXXII

A VISIT TO THE ASYLUM

THE house in the Avenue du Bois de Boulogne was sumptuous, but not garish; the architecture was rich, but simple. The mansion showed the elegance of a fastidious home without crying it out from the façade and massive entrance gates.

William had shown exquisite taste, and Evelyne was in every way the grande dame, with a distinction and a charm which filled me with pride. She had grown into a beautiful woman in the last three years, and from her premature experience of life she had gained an attitude of haughty dignity which struck me forcibly. I did not recognize my little girl with her quick, thoughtless ways. She carried her trouble with dignity, with a haughty and almost disdainful melancholy, because, with her sorrow, she had to carry not only the weight of her own destiny but also of her two children, who bore the name of the man whom her own brother had murdered.

She reigned as a queen in the beautiful home where sorrow had entered with her. In her calm, womanly way she reigned with authority over her retinue of servants, over her uncle Marcadian and her children, and I knew that I, in my turn, should submit to this authority. Her power in her household was incontestable.

I knew from the moment that I saw her that her pride had helped her to bear all. And I saw that she alone of us all had soared above the tragic circumstances. Then I suddenly discovered the secret of this incontestable authority, this womanly dignity, which seemed to lift her so far above all.

It was not the little daughter of Barrabas or the unhappy girl-wife of the mad doctor; it was the mother of Pierre and Suzanne who was bearing the heavy load of a tragic destiny.

The fraulein had brought them into the small drawing-room on the first floor to introduce them to me.

"Are they not beautiful children, Mr. Douglass?" Evelyne said, simply. "All my ambition will be to make them good and happy."

She had spoken the first phrase with simple pride, but the second was tinged with some bitterness.

Pierre and Suzanne looked at me with eyes op-

ened wide in astonishment. My horrible, burned face did not charm them at first sight, and in spite of the eager playfulness with which I tried to coax them I saw plainly that I inspired them with a sort of instinctive fear. My heart was craving for my little grand-children's love. I wanted to take them in my arms and stroke their blonde curls with my trembling fingers. I could not reply to what Evelyne was saying. I was speechless. The little ones were looking up at me with terrified eyes. Suzanne's mouth began to pucker and I was afraid she was going to cry.

Evelyne looked at me for a moment, then she said, quietly:

"Mr. Douglass, you are too sensitive."

And that was all. As the fraulein took the frightened children away Marcadian came into the room. It had been arranged that we were to go in the afternoon to Saint Mande. The automobile was waiting for us at the door.

"I see how unnerved you are. I know it must be terrible for you to see poor William in such a condition," Marcadian said.

I was not even thinking of William at that moment, but I pulled myself together and said, trying to speak calmly:

"The ordeal will be painful, but I have been through others as painful in my life. Is Mme. Kingsley coming with us?"

"Yes, Evelyne has more courage than I have," said Marcadian.

We took our seats in the auto and started across Paris to the insane asylum, where the millionaire's victim was a patient.

I was afraid that the doctor meeting me again might create a terrible scene and that it might have a serious effect upon Evelyne. She had said to me only the night before the same as Marcadian had:

"My poor husband says very strange things. He has a fixed idea that you are my unfortunate father."

This was not said in the careless, indifferent manner in which Marcadian had said the same thing. Her eyes had not left mine while she was speaking and she had said it in such a grave tone that I began to fear her suspicions were aroused.

The doctor who had succeeded William in the management of the sanatorium came forward to meet us as soon as we arrived. He was a tall young man with a frank smile and pleasant manners. To him I was Charles Douglass, the American millionaire, and merely a friend of the family.

The place looked just the same. I might have left it only the night before. In the doctor's room and the large salon nothing had been altered; the same pieces of heavy furniture stood in the same places. I thought of the day when Evelyne had swooned and Marcadian had been overcome. My nerves were more under control than Marcadian's. I had nothing to fear for myself, but I was dreading the effect my presence might have upon William.

"Mr. Douglass," said the alienist, "my patient will not know you; he is hopelessly lost. He confuses you with the sculptor, Barrabas."

We were walking a little ahead of Marcadian and Evelyne.

"I know of the great sorrow that Mrs. Kingsley has gone through." continued the specialist, "so I can speak freely. You sent a telegram telling him that the girl he was engaged to marry a few years ago was dead. The news of her death is the cause of his mortal insanity."

"Mortal! Do you really mean mortal, doctor?"

Then, just in the same cold, matter-of-fact manner that the doctor in Montreal had told me that the little singer of the Grosvenor concert was doomed, the director of the insane asylum said:

"He will not live eight days. I am going to tell Maitre Marcadian so that he can prepare Mme. Kingsley. We must be very careful. I am Mme. Kingsley's medical adviser, and I know that the shock might be very serious for her."

Then he said to me in a confidential tone so as not to be overheard:

"It is a cardiac case, and we must be very careful. From the time that her father-in-law was murdered by that stranger whom you adopted we have been twice at the point of losing her. She might live for years, or she might be taken off at any moment."

My heart seemed to stop beating at the doctor's brutal confidence, but he had not time to see the pallor which came over my face. Marcadian and Evelyne joined us at the end of the passage, and we stood before cell No. 13.

"I think," said the alienist, "that it is better for me to go in alone with Mr. Douglass first."

Evelyne agreed, and she and her uncle remained outside. I must admit that my heart beat quickly as I passed through the padded door. William was seated on the edge of the couch. How he had altered! His thin face and his strangely glittering eyes gave me a shock. He raised his thin hand

to his forehead as if to chase away the clouds which obscured his thoughts. He was sitting in the same attitude that Z—— had when I first saw him. There was the same prostration, the same delusive look. I recalled his dangerous Lombroso theory of mental derangements, which were so current but visible only to those who were experts on the diseases of the brain, and here was the sanity expert before my eyes, not simulating madness like Polydore, but the victim of an irremediable lunacy.

He looked at me with a strange expression. There was curiosity mingled with anguish in his look. Then suddenly his face broke into a smile. He made a feint of saluting me military fashion.

"One of your friends, William," said the doctor.

He shook his head and replied:

"My father has never been my friend."

He recognized me, then, I thought.

Then the poor fellow said in a stern voice:

"What have you come to do here, Addison Kingsley? Do you wish to kill my mother or my sweetheart Lucie? I will protect them both."

And he pressed against him two dolls which he had carefully dressed in silk finery. He fondled them and rocked them in his arms with tender words.

"Do not be afraid, mother. Do not be afraid, Lucie, my darling. I have you both, and no one shall hurt you now," he said. And he covered the dolls' faces with soft kisses.

"He takes you for Mr. Kingsley now," said the doctor. "This is the first time he has not spoken in anger."

He went to the door and made a sign to Marcadian and Evelyne to come in.

Evelyne had only taken two steps in the cell when the poor maniac jumped up quickly from his couch to which he was fastened with leather straps which held him like reins. He stretched his arms out toward Evelyne and cried in a piercing voice:

"Lucie! Lucie! My darling. You have come at last. I have waited so long for you."

Evelyne turned away her head.

I passed my arm around her tenderly.

"Let us go," I said. "Come away. Evelyne, dear."

I recalled the time when I had carried her trembling body in my arms the day she had visited Z——. I thought she would lean on me now, but she turned and walked, with head erect, beside me down the long passage, her proud young face wearing a look of profound sadness.

"LUCIE! LUCIE! MY DARLING, YOU HAVE COME AT LAST."
Page 324.

We thanked the director of the asylum and went back to the automobile, which stood at the entrance gate of the grounds.

Again I thought of Kingsley. I wondered if he had seen poor William today if his vengeance would have given him the happiness that he thought.

Then I thought of William in the full strength of his intelligence. I thought of the day when he had hired the frisky little dog and English dog-cart from the Rue de Paris and drove me over to Bry to visit the sculptor's home.

I had an intense wish to visit my little home again. It was an irresistible desire which took hold of me suddenly. For a moment I tried to conquer it. Then I turned to Evelyne as she lay back among the cushions.

"Would you mind if we prolonged our ride and went as far as Bry-sur-Marne? It is almost a quarter of an hour from here. If I remember rightly. I went there once with William. Or perhaps you are tired and would rather return home?"

Evelyne gave me the quick searching look that she had given me before.

"How curious!" she said, "that we should both have the same thought. I was going to make the

suggestion that we go on to Bry, but I did not know if the visit would interest you."

"What interests you, Evelyne, interests me," I replied.

Then once again I saw the statue of "Life" for which Gabrielle had posed. I sat down with trembling limbs on the sofa near where she had fallen. Nothing had been changed. The chairs, the hangings had always been arranged in the same way by Evelyne. My books—the works I loved—were on the shelves, awaiting the reader.

I seemed to be in a dream. I forgot the beautiful home on the Avenue du Bois, where Evelyne, heiress of millions, lived like a queen. I forgot the madhouse where the doctor was closed up as though in a tomb. For a moment I forgot Evelyne, who was in my studio, going from right to left, arranging an ornament here, a picture there.

I was thinking of Barrabas, the sculptor, living in his studio again.

"What is the matter? Of what are you thinking?" said Marcadian, placing his hand gently on my shoulder.

I shook myself. I had such a dual personality that I was able to reply with perfect calmness:

"I was thinking of the happiness a man once

had within these four walls. I was thinking of Evelyne's father."

Evelyne came up. She had not heard our conversation.

"What are you talking about so earnestly?" she said, looking at me.

"If I ask you a favor, Evelyne, will you grant it?" I said.

"Yes. Ask anything you like," she said smiling.

"You do not wish to live in this cottage, neither do you wish to let it to strangers. I am not quite a stranger to you, Evelyne, and I should so like it."

"Do you mean to say you would like to live in this little place while you are here in France!" exclaimed Marcadian. "You cannot mean it, really. Why, you would be far more comfortable in Evelyne's house in the Avenue du Bois."

"If you wish, the cottage is yours, Mr. Douglass," said Evelyne quietly.

CHAPTER XXXIII

THE MASK

I WAS undecided what to do. I could not make up my mind one way or the other. Arrived at the extreme point of my adventures, what logical solution ought I to give them. I was sole master of the situation. No more counterpoise! No more obstacles!

The doctor died fifteen days after my arrival in France. Now there was no one who knew the secret of my life. If I wished I could confess all to Evelyne and Marcadian, or I could keep my lips closed forever. I knew that Evelyne would have welcomed my confession with joy. I had often caught her looking searchingly at me, and then she would turn away with a troubled look in her eyes. If I told her that I was her own father Barrabas, I should be able to live with her and my little grandchildren for the rest of my days, or, on the other hand, I could continue, without risk, now being Charles Douglass, Addison Kingsley's successor.

If I were only to go by my feelings, I should have decided upon the first solution, for my cottage was to me better than any palace on earth, and to be with my daughter and little Pierre and Suzanne my greatest joy.

But the voice of reason drove back all sentiment. What right had I, as Barrabas, to thrust myself into their lives? For what selfish sentiment should I stand up in the lives of others like the living image of remorse? If I once threw aside the mask which had enabled me to play my part, each hour of the day I should be a constant reminder of their sorrows; my disfigured, burned face would be an everlasting reminder of all that had happened, and if not for Evelyne's sake, at least for the little ones' future, I felt I should have to show more courage and put all sentiment aside. To leave them and return to America was the last sacrifice that I should be called upon to make. I would go back as I came. I would leave forever the little cottage, which in the springtime would have its climbing glycine, where I had lived so happily. I would leave forever the studio and the unfinished statue of "Life."

I should have kept firmly to my resolve if the climax to my adventures had not come in an unexpected and terrible manner.

I will be as brief as I can in giving the facts which conclude my story.

Almost every day I went to Paris to Evelyne's home. The children and I had become great friends. My horrible face no longer frightened them. They climbed on my knees and put their little arms around my neck.

William's death had come as a great shock to Evelyne, and for a time her life was in danger. The doctor, who spoke without reserve, believing me to be merely a friend of the family, had remarked to me:

"Soon the children will be orphans, Mr. Douglass. In Madame's short life she has undergone so many successive emotions that her constitution is ruined. She is consumed by an internal suffering which does the most harm and against which our science has no remedy. To use a simile, she is like a lyre that has been strung to its highest pitch, and one day all its chords will snap at the same time under too violent and heart-rending notes."

I listened to the doctor's confidence without showing too much emotion. I knew that some medical men were given to exaggerating. How I regretted after that I had not attached the importance to his words that he intended to convey!

During the two months that I had lived in the cottage Tape a l'Oeil, the old retired army officer and scandalmonger of the village, had often dropped in to see me.

"Look here, Monsieur l'Americain," he said frankly one day to me, "this story of Barrabas is an infernal yarn. Don't you believe what that old lawyer Marcadian says, he is a deceitful creature. I knew the sculptor as well as I know you. He was a happy-go-lucky sort. There has been a plot. For my part, I never believed in Polydore's suicide any more than I did in the father's. That was all humbug. And one of these days you will see them come back."

"What you say is foolish, Tape a l'Oeil. It is proved that Barrabas did it, but that it was an accident."

"Accident! Why you are not stupid enough to think that, Monsieur l'Americain? In the village we know all about it. Barrabas, the sculptor, was fishing down the Marne at the time of the accident. Don't make me believe it was an accident. That young Polydore was a very worthy young man—the very best of sons. I tell you, the affair was mysterious."

"Most certainly I agree with you."

"A mystery of which only that old rogue Marcadian has the key."

"Why Marcadian?" I exclaimed.

"Because Marcadian——"

And the old officer looked around cautiously to see if there was any one near to overhear. Then he whispered in my ear:

"Because Marcadian, in my belief, was the one who committed the murder!"

This idea of poor old Marcadian being a murderer was too absurd. I looked in amazement at my ridiculous companion. He looked back at me, rolling his great, stupid eyes under his bushy eyebrows. Then he added mysteriously, as he placed his finger to his mouth:

"Yes, and I have known it right from the first."

Sometimes the old officer would play jokes. Despite his aggressive moustache and loud voice, his heart was as simple and naïve as a child's. One morning when I was in my studio he came into the house and pushed open my door without knocking. He called out in his harsh voice:

"Bon jour, Monsieur l'Americain."

I turned around, annoyed at the interruption, and saw the absurd old thing all fixed up in a painted

mask, adorned with a thick, long beard like the youngsters used for the carnival.

I was so surprised at this absurdity that I found nothing to say to him.

"Eh bien," he said, taking off his mask and laughing with his mouth wide open. "You don't seem to know that to-day is Mardi Gras. Ah! Ah! Ah! You don't know how to laugh in America."

He laid his mask on the table and turned to shake hands with me.

"You are like a boy, Monsieur Tape a l'Oeil. You will never grow old," I said.

And we lighted our pipes and chatted together until eleven o'clock. That day I was expecting Marcadian, Evelyne and the little ones to luncheon.

Tape a l'Oeil had been with me a full hour telling me some funny yarns of his soldier life. I was glad when my guests arrived, for I was able to get rid of him. The old fellow excused himself politely and shuffled off. After he had gone I noticed that he had forgotten to take his carnival mask with him.

That day Evelyne did not seem quite so well as usual. The children were mischievous. Pierre and Suzanne now adored me. I joined in all their

games and let them do just whatever they liked with me. I was their slave.

"You are spoiling them, Mr. Douglass," Evelyne would say reproachfully.

"They will be miserable when you return to America," Marcadian would add.

I was annoyed that Marcadian continually mentioned my going away. I was to sail the following week and I was feeling bad enough about leaving them without being reminded of it all the time.

It was a beautiful day for that time of the year, and Evelyne had decided after the coffee and liqueurs to take a walk along the Marne with the children. Marcadian asked me to go with them, but I had formed the bad habit of taking a nap after luncheon, so I prepared to take a doze on the sofa in the studio, just as I did every day.

I was lying on the sofa with closed eyes. I was not asleep, I was just dozing, when Pierre and Suzanne came back from their walk and tip-toed into my studio.

"Sh! Sh!" they said, stifling their gay little laugh. "He's asleep."

Under my eyelids I saw their kittenish, timid movements. They were up to some mischief. They

were looking out to see if they could not play some Mardi Gras joke like old Tape a l'Oeil.

I did not move. I pretended to sleep so as to let them enjoy their fun. It was Suzanne who first spied the mask, with its long beard and thick wig of hair, which was on the table.

"Oh! Oh!" she exclaimed, covering her mouth with her chubby hand so as to stifle the sound. Then with a half-timid movement she put it on and walked about the studio on tip-toe. Then she put it on little Pierre's face and burst out laughing. I opened my eyes slightly so as to watch their antics.

Then I saw the mask as I had not seen it in the morning. With its beard and long hair it recalled exactly my face as it had been before Addison Kingsley had applied the vitriol. There was the same cut of beard, the color of the hair slightly waved, with the parting on the right side of the head. This caricature of my real face on little Pierre was irresistibly funny.

"Let us put it on him," Suzanne whispered, pointing to me.

Then very cautiously, holding their breath and their laughter, they tip-toed quietly up to the sofa. I did not move. With a great deal of trouble, her

small hands trembling so, Suzanne placed the mask over my burned face.

They stood off at a little distance to see the effect, when suddenly the studio door opened and Evelyne came in.

Caught in the act and delighted with their joke, the children held up their fingers to their mother to be silent, and whispered:

"Hush, mamma! He's asleep."

And I, to finish the joke and surprise the children, raised myself on my elbow and said:

"Sh! Sh!"

Then Pierre and Suzanne excitedly danced round, singing gayly in their baby voices:

"C'est Mardi Gras. The mask! The mask!"

But through the holes of the mask I saw Evelyne with a sudden terror stretch out her arms toward me, I saw her wild eyes, her trembling lips, her face as pale as the dead.

Then only did I realize the shock I had given her. I snatched off the mask, which recalled only too vividly my face that used to be, and it seemed that I snatched the life from her at the same moment. She staggered and gave one piercing cry:

"My father!" Then she fell.

The frightened children ran from the room call-

ing for help. Marcadian and the servants rushed in.

I lifted up my daughter's body, which had fallen at the foot of the statue of "Life," on the same spot where her mother had fallen.

I carried her upstairs and laid her on the bed that she had as a young girl.

"Run to Bry and fetch a doctor, and leave us alone," I said to Marcadian.

She opened her eyes. In my rough hand I held her pale fingers, but the little flashing emerald was not there now. Her lips quivered. Then she smiled. She tried to speak. I bent my ear down as she whispered:

"You are safe, father; I can die happy now."

Then over her calm face came a look of joy. Her lips quivered again; she gave a little sigh—she was dead.

The doctor came back with Marcadian.

"I see it has happened," he said, in a stupid, dazed fashion.

"Yes," said the doctor, "it is the end. We have been expecting it for some time."

Then I knew that all was ended.

CHAPTER XXXIV

EPILOGUE

I BELIEVE what the poets tell us, that the two forces Love and Death govern the world.

There is also Life, of which Love and Death are extreme poles. Life is opening to Pierre and Suzanne. Gabrielle, Polydore and Evelyne are of the past. There are only Pierre and Suzanne left for me now; the rest have gone.

Daily I go down to the banks of the Marne and fish for carp, coloring carefully the while my meerschaum pipe.

Tape a l'Oeil is my constant companion. Often he says to me:

"Voyez-vous, Monsieur l'Americain, you are eccentric! With all your money you live here so quietly in this little village. The sculptor Barrabas used to like to come here to fish. Some day I will tell you all about him. I was always with him, the same as I am with you. Ah! that old scoundrel Marcadian can't deceive me."

Marcadian came to see me often.

"Mr. Douglass," he said to me one day, "I accepted the guardianship of Pierre and Suzanne after my niece's death, but in case anything should happen to me I hope you will take my place. I am getting old. You love them as much as I do, and I know that you will look after them."

And I remained alone. Unknown to all, with the certainty of remaining so until my death, alone in my little cottage at Bry. And as paradoxical as the word may appear, I am happy, happy in caring for the happiness of Pierre and Suzanne.

I did not return to New York. Mr. Teck and John Fellows took upon themselves the great liquidation of the paper business. I remained the largest stockholder, but the trust was conducted by John Fellows, who well deserved his good fortune.

He had served the firm long and faithfully.

That is all.

I remain forever "The Man without a Face."

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